



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: S. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Rains may trigger flash floods and landslides over E. Mindanao. The rest of Visayas will have cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY CYRIL B. MARANTE, FORECASTER/01/09/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer.news.name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bohol	Cloudy with Rains
Bugala	Partly Cloudy	Rorao	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Yasobon	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	San Antonio	Cloudy with Rains
Tegaylay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Bike used in Gingoyon slay found

THE POLICE YESTERDAY RECOVERED the motorcycle believed to have been used by the gunman in the Dec. 31 ambush-slaying of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon.

Investigators said the bike's recovery was an important step in uncovering the identity of the assassination's mastermind.

Officials believe the motorcycle's owner could tell the police who ordered the judge's killing.

But police had different accounts of the motorcycle's recovery.

Cavite police chief Sr. Supt. Benjardi Mantele said the motorcycle, a Kawasaki with plate No. WH-3152, was recovered around 4 a.m. near a Bosque in Green Valley subdivision

in Molino 3, Bacoor, Cavite.

Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, Calabarzon police director, said the motorcycle was found at the house of suspect Hadji Alimudin in Samata Village in Las Piñas City during a raid at around 4 a.m. Sunday.

The raiding team, however, failed to find Alimudin.

Arrested suspects Mark "Macmac" Datas and Sajid "Danny" Sulaiman told police during interrogation where the vehicle could be recovered. Datas admitted he was the driver of the getaway vehicle.

The police are now hunting the man who allegedly lent the motorcycle to Alimudin.

"It was Alimudin who provided

money to one of the suspects, who, in turn, hired the gunman. It was also he who provided the motorcycle. That means if we get him, he may be able to tell us a lot," said Mantele.

The police gave very little details about Alimudin, other than he was a Christian who had converted to Islam and whose real name was Allan Cusa.

Gingoyon's remains were cremated yesterday in Cebu City.

His ashes will be brought to his home in Cavite this afternoon, according to the judge's elder brother, Jerome.

Luige A. del Puerto; Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Jhunnex Napal-lacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

5-M signatures drive opposed by senators

'Plan is administration ploy'

By TJ Burgonio

EASTERN SAMAR GOV. BEN Evardone's plan to mount a "people's initiative" and gather five million signatures in support of Charter change has run into a brick wall in the Senate.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday vowed to oppose the plan, which he said was nothing but an administration-orchestrated ploy to prolong President Macapagal-Arroyo's stay in power.

"I don't care what he's proposing, I will oppose it," Pimentel said in a phone interview. "That's obviously a ploy to prolong the administration's [hold on power]."

Free ride

Pimentel said Evardone's group, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap), was being used by the Arroyo administration to press for support for changes to the 1987 Constitution, including the controversial recommendation by the Consultative Commission to scrap the 2007 elections on the way to a transition to a parliamentary form of government.

"They [local officials] will also get a free ride," Pimentel said, since canceling the midterm polls would extend the terms of all incumbent elected officials.

"That's bribery as far as the local government officials are concerned," he said.

12% of voters

Evardone, Ulap spokesperson, had said the group would kick off a campaign to obtain the signatures of 12 percent of the registered voters in support of proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Since the voting population is estimated at over 40 million, the number of signatures needed to mount a people's initiative would be a little less than five million, he said.

Palace happy

Malacañang, meanwhile, was elated over the Ulap plan.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday the plan should be welcomed as "a constructive democracy exercise in support of overall political reform and change."

Bunye called the Ulap initiative a "new front of popular participation that will enrich the debates and enlarge the arena of political change and transformation."

"Indeed, the whole Filipino nation must participate in Charter change and thereby help shape our collective future," he said in his weekly "View from the Palace" column.

Suspect plan

But Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, said Evardone's plan "was suspect" just as the ConCom's independence was put into question because it was composed of governors and mayors.

The ConCom was created by President Macapagal-Arroyo to recommend changes to the 1987 Constitution. It was composed of present and former local government officials, jurists, educators, newspaper columnists and others.

"Since it [proposal] comes from a governor [Evardone], it will surely show that this administration is intent on changing the Constitution to benefit a powerful few," Gordon said in an interview.

Under study

Gordon's committee was still studying the House resolution seeking to convene Congress into a constituent assembly that would propose amendments to the Constitution and was still awaiting the ConCom's recommendation.

Before it starts hearings, the senator has drawn up a list of questions for the resource persons: "Are the people in favor of changing the Constitution? Which is the best mode? Which is less costly?"

As far as he was concerned, Gordon said instituting reforms in the country's flawed electoral system, such as modernizing the polls, strengthening the party system by banning party-switching and ensuring voters' access to candidates through the media, was more important than amending the Constitution.

With Christine O. Avendaño

Consumer & Oil Price Watch in 2006:
RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT
TO FILIPINO CONSUMERS

MARAMING SALAMAT PO

At the start of the New Year, COPW thanks:

- The thousands of COPW followers nationwide for your messages of support we received through text, calls, and e-mails throughout the year.
- Congress for giving us the opportunity to present our position on various issues affecting the economy, such as tax measures to raise revenues.
- The Cabinet Secretaries and Regulatory Agencies for their continuous cooperation by providing valuable data and information which we use to support our positions that affect the general public.

COPW looks after the plight of unemployed, low-income earners, and the middle class Filipinos who are now having a very difficult time coping with the increasing cost of basic services, public transport & ocean fares, toll ways, electricity, oil, and water.

COPW renews its commitment to Filipino consumers, that in 2006, we will continue to pursue TRANSPARENCY, DISCLOSURE, and ACCOUNTABILITY with greater vigor & perseverance in government expenditures and the bidding & awards of government infrastructure projects and public works.

TIME TO UNITE & WORK TOGETHER

Today, our nation is divided as it has never been before. Yet, a change in the form of government, from presidential to parliamentary, is not the solution to most of our problems.

Instead, change must come from within us, in our leaders, and in our electoral system.

We have cherished values as a people

We have to revisit the cherished values we had in the past that made us a great nation: freedom, integrity, honesty, hard work, self sacrifice, palabra de honor, & nation's interest first above our own.

Our political leaders must inspire & unite our people

Our President and the leadership in both the House & Senate must keep our people and the country together, and must focus on the economy, creating jobs, encouraging local and foreign investments.

Thus, we call for AUTOMATED elections in May 2007.

WHY HOLD ELECTIONS IN MAY 2007?

Elections must be held in May 2007 as provided by the Constitution. Whether it's a unicameral parliamentary or bicameral as it is now (which our people will decide in a plebiscite), elections must be held for the 12 Senators, 238 Representatives, and around 17,000 local posts in cities, municipalities, and provinces whose term of office will expire in 2007.

Elections will unite, rather than divide, the nation. It will clarify the issues, rather than confuse our people.

WHY AUTOMATE THE ELECTION NOW?

1. We have to prepare now & modernize our electoral system thru computerization which will clean voters' lists, establish the biometric data of voters, and ensure speedy counting of votes.
2. Safeguards must be in place to ensure transparency and NO human intervention to manipulate the encoded data.
3. If the elections are clean and honest, our people will respect the system and the results.

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Non-politician should head DENR, say environmentalists

By Blanche S. Rivera

ENVIRONMENTALISTS YESTERDAY URGED Malacañang to appoint a non-politician to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to replace Secretary Michael T. Defensor who is reportedly being transferred to Malacañang.

The World Wildlife Fund said the DENR needed someone who was more transparent, credible and sober-minded than Defensor, who had been criticized for the logging and mining concessions he granted during his term.

"Mike Defensor from the start made it very clear he was a politician and his actions were true to his own politics. (He did) what will result in making the administration look good. He was not transparent enough," WWF president Lorenzo Tan said in a phone interview.

Tan said Defensor's replacement should be able to recognize the important problems and issues, which somebody with a political agen-

da could not do.

Defensor has been reported to be among the Cabinet members that will figure in a re-vamp early this year. He is being eyed as President Macapagal-Arroyo's next chief of staff.

"I would rather that the new secretary is not a politician because a politician has too many favors to give out, especially if you're with the administration," Haribon president Anabelle Plantilla said.

Haribon, which has been pushing for a total commercial log ban, wants someone with a bias toward conservation and not utilization, considering the country's depleted resources.

Environmentalists agreed that mining would be the biggest challenge for the next DENR chief considering the agency's conflicting mandate to protect resources while tapping those of mining.

"Resource extraction is like unfinished brain surgery. It has been opened up but hasn't been clearly settled," Tan said.

NPA attacks 'curtain raisers,' says Ka Roger

LUCENA CITY—THE RECENT AMBUSCADES and army raids conducted by communist New People's Army rebels against government forces were a prelude to more heightened offensives across the country, spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said yesterday.

"Those attacks were mere curtain raisers. More solid blows will be dealt upon the fascist forces to heighten the fall of the despotic US-Arroyo regime," said Rosal, the spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, in a phone interview.

Rosal said the NPA had prioritized the seizure and accumulation of firearms and ammunition for its growing ranks.

"We must seize arms from the enemy to form more armed units to strengthen the growing ranks of Red fighters," he said.

Last Friday, a band of communist rebels stormed the police station in Albura, Leyte, seizing 30 assorted firearms from the policemen on duty who offered no resistance.

Earlier that day, some 50 suspected rebels killed five policemen and three civilians in an ambush in Claveria, Masbate.

On Jan. 2, three government security personnel, including a town police chief, were killed and two others wounded in an ambush perpetrated by alleged NPA rebels in Matnog, Sorsogon.

Rosal boasted that the more than 200 attacks carried out by the NPA across the country in the last quarter would pale in comparison to the much bigger attacks to be staged this year.

"Several guerrilla fronts have now mastered the strategy of consolidating forces to successfully carry out the desired goal, especially in tactical offensives against the enemies. It is now a plus factor to their growing strength and combat capabilities," Rosal had said in an earlier interview.

In a text message, Rosal said the NPA's Jose Rapsing Command in Masbate had admitted responsibility for the command-detonated land mine ambush in Claveria.

Rosal claimed the three slain civilians were military assets in the area.

He said the rebels seized two M-14 and four M-16 rifles and one .30-cal. machine gun in the ambush.

The NPA staged the ambush, he said, to punish the government forces for their rampant human rights violations in the area.

In its founding anniversary message last month, the CPP central committee ordered the NPA, its armed faction, to intensify its attacks against government troops in a bid to help the broad anti-Arroyo forces topple the administration in the next six months.

Peace negotiations with the communist rebels, brokered by Norway, have been stalled since August 2004 when the government declined to help persuade the United States and the European Union to drop the rebel movement from its terror blacklist. Delfin T. Malari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 senators press RP custody of 4 GIs

From page A1

15,000 yen (\$129) on Yokosuka Street near the US naval base, 45 km southwest of Tokyo.

US stalling

In contrast, the US military has stalled on the Philippine government's repeated demands to hand over the four Marines accused of raping a 22-year-old woman inside a van at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales in November.

The four were SSgt. Chad Carpenter and Lance Corporals Dominic Duplant, Daniel Smith and Keith Silkwood. Charged with them was Timoteo Soriano Jr., the Filipino driver of the van.

Gordon stressed that the US government should turn over custody of the four accused to the Philippine government "out of respect" for its longtime ally.

Unless the Americans respected the Filipinos' desire for the government to assert sovereignty and gain custody of the accused, the Visiting Forces Agreement "would be put to the test," he said.

"The reliability of the Philippines as an ally does not depend on these four servicemen who did a crime off-duty. We're a reliable ally because of the VFA, and we've agreed to train each other because of the VFA," he added.

Arrest warrants

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the Philippines should wait first for the arrest warrants to be issued against the US servicemen before insisting on gaining custody of them.

If the United States ignores the warrant, then that is when the country should assert its desire to be in charge of the suspects, Gonzalez said when asked about the Japan case.

"We will first wait for the results of the hearing in court," Gonzalez said in a phone interview. "All these things will be academic if the court issues a warrant. Let us not try to anticipate what will happen. If the United States refuses to surrender them, then that is the time for us to negotiate."

Olongapo Judge Renato Dilag, who is handling the rape case, has not yet issued arrest warrants for the suspects. He still has to resolve the six motions filed by the accused. The

motions seek judicial determination of probable cause or a stay of arrest.

Gonzalez also said Japan's accord with the United States and Manila's agreement with the US might be different from each other. He pointed out that under the VFA, the United States could have custody of its servicemen accused of a crime.

The VFA also provides that the Philippines could request custody of the suspects under special circumstances. The Philippines formally sought custody of the accused servicemen in November, but the United States never even responded to the letter.

US cooperation in Japan

In Japan, the US military has pledged to work closely with the Japanese police on the case. High-level American officials, including Ambassador Thomas Schieffer, have expressed regret over the attack.

The case comes at an important juncture for the US military in Japan. Washington and Tokyo are working to overcome local opposition to plans to build an American military airstrip on the southern island of Okinawa, and to base a US nuclear-powered warship at Yokosuka for the first time.

In 1995, the rape of a 12-year-old girl by three US servicemen on Okinawa set off large and emotional anti-US military protests, and led to the relocation of an air base to a less densely populated part of the island.

The rape case also resulted in an agreement that the US military would hand over American suspects in serious crimes to Japanese authorities for pre-indictment investigation.

About 50,000 US troops are stationed in Japan under a joint security pact, but Tokyo and Washington agreed last October to move 7,000 Marines from Okinawa to the US Pacific island territory of Guam, and to shift some other troops within Japan.

A Philippine official, who requested anonymity because he is involved in the ongoing negotiations, said Japan was in a better position than the Philippines to assert its sovereignty in a criminal case.

He pointed out that Japan's advantage included better terms under its Status of Force Agreement (Sofa) with the United States. With an AP report

Roxas demeaning OFW ...

From page A1

"To dismiss the strong peso as no big deal is to demean the sacrifices and heroism of our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who are tirelessly working beyond our shores to provide economic security to their loved ones," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Providing economic security for their kin, Bunye said, was a "big deal" for Filipinos who dream of a better life.

"National survival borne out of collective effort and synergy in the hardest times is a big deal," he said.

Roxas also criticized Malacañang's unrelenting optimism over other positive indicators, such as the surging stocks and bonds.

"The headline statistics being trumpeted by the government are good and yet everybody is feeling lousy and their sales reflect this lousiness," he said Saturday.

Roxas said higher stocks and lower bond spreads were meaningless to most Filipinos if these did not lead to more capital raised and more affordable loans for businesses and consumers.

Roxas also said that giving the poor subsidized noodles and rice would satisfy their hunger for a day but would not provide them with steady incomes and affordable food and services.

Bunye said the administration shared the concerns of Roxas and in fact was already moving toward providing the people with the benefits of the tough economic reforms put in place by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Bunye, also the presidential spokesperson, said the Arroyo administration had already announced a P35-billion program aimed at pump-priming the economy in the first three months of the year. Part of the funds will subsidize noodles and rice for the poor.

"We assure him that the payback on economic reforms is already here in terms of the multi-billion-peso pump-priming program, as well as the larger strategic programs to fight hunger and poverty," he said in his weekly newspaper column.

Bunye said the government was putting in place immediate and long-term relief measures "to jump-start jobs, lower the cost of food, increase access to cheap, quality medicine and health insurance, broaden education and housing opportunities, and expand infrastructure to push productivity."

Several congressmen came to the defense of Malacañang.

Poised for takeover

Disagreeing with Roxas' statement, Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus,

chair of the House ways and means committee, said the economy was poised for a "takeoff" despite the "destructive politics" afflicting the country.

"But, of course, is not that what governance and unity are all about?" he said in a phone interview.

"It's like saying that the fuel in the rocket is useless unless there's a launch. Who's going to launch it? It's not just the executive. It's all of us."

Lapus said that while the real economic effects might not yet be felt by the people due to global factors beyond the control of the government, the strong currency and other positive economic indicators "have no doubt strengthened the country's fiscal position, and trade and international credit standing."

Lower debt service

Lapus said the peso's strength against the dollar meant lower landed costs of all imported goods, including oil.

"The effect of a stronger peso is immediately felt," he said.

Take, for example, the case of a bond flotation, he said. "It's seven times oversubscribed. For example, we tried to raise \$2 billion but instead got a \$14 billion order. The effect? Lower interest expense."

Lapus explained that a cheaper dollar would also translate to lower debt service, thus a bigger budget for basic services. "The allocation for basic services in the national budget is primarily for the poor."

Addressing poverty

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said a strong peso was critical to the country's survival "because it makes fiscal reforms more bearable."

He said fiscal reforms were critical in enabling the government to address poverty.

Salceda, chair of the House committee on economic affairs, said the peso appreciation against the dollar and the easing of global oil prices had allowed a P2.60-a-liter decrease in pump prices to pre-VAT (value-added tax) levels.

"Isn't it not a benefit?" he said.

"The peso is just another price, and no cure-all. As Roxas implies, you need a mix of policies to do it. And PGMA (Ms Arroyo) can't do it alone. Everyone must do their part rather than just heckle from the sidelines, (which is) quite easy to do," Salceda said.

Other House leaders said the strong peso and surging stocks were "indicators of a vibrant economy, which the government is not crowing about but merely cites in calling on the political leaders and the people to join the administration to move the nation forward by setting aside bitter partisan bickering."

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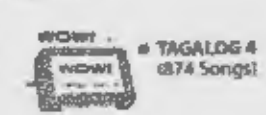
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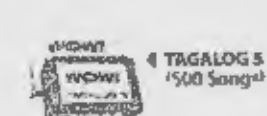
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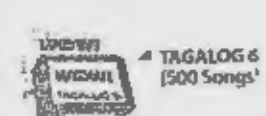
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TAGALOG 4 (874 Songs)

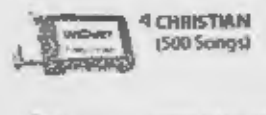


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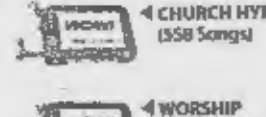


TAGALOG 6 (500 Songs)

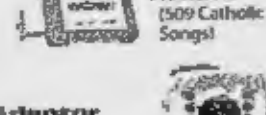
Religious Song Chip



CHRISTIAN (500 Songs)



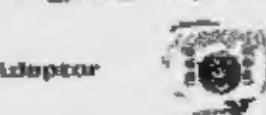
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SEC official resigns ahead of end of term

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) Commissioner Josefa Poblador has resigned after a five-year stint with the corporate watchdog.

Poblador, 60, whose term ends in 2007, told the *Inquirer* that she had decided to take a short rest, "to do some painting and golf."

Sources confirmed yesterday that President Macapagal-Arroyo had accepted Poblador's resignation.

But the SEC had yet to receive a formal notice from the Office of the President approving the resignation. Poblador filed her resignation on Dec. 1.

Poblador was one of the five members of the commission en banc, under the leadership of chair Fe Barin.

Poblador, who was appointed in 2000 by former President Joseph Estrada, was the longest-serving SEC commissioner among her fellow commissioners: Juanita Cueto, Jesus Martinez and Raul Palabrica.

"My term ends in 2007. I just turned 60 and I wish to move on to other things," she said in a text message to the *Inquirer*.

She also belied any controversy surrounding her decision to resign. Poblador had taken an opposing view with that of the commission on certain issues affecting the pre-need industry.

At the SEC, Poblador actively held close watch over suspected boiler room operations. These refer to the use of high pressure sales tactics to sell bogus or dubious securities to clients.

Poblador had earlier retired from Caltex (Phils.) Inc. where she spent over 21 years.

She graduated from the University of the Philippines, with Bachelor of Arts (Economics) and Bachelor of Laws degrees.

Upon admission to the Philippine bar, she was transferred to the legal and policy research office of the presidential economic staff.

With a scholarship from the University of Texas at Austin School of Law, she earned her Master of Comparative Jurisprudence (Taxation) degree.

Reinstate raps vs Marcos kids, lawyers urge

THE GOVERNMENT LAST WEEK ASKED THE Sandiganbayan to reverse its ruling dismissing ill-gotten wealth charges against the children of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos—Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and Irene Marcos-Araneta and her husband Gregorio Araneta III.

In a 55-page motion for reconsideration submitted on Friday, lawyers from the Solicitor General's office and the Presidential Commission on Good Government said the anti-graft court's Fourth Division erred when it scrapped on Dec. 6 evidence presented against the Marcos children and Araneta.

They said that all documentary exhibits presented in court had been gathered by the PCGG in the course of its investigation into the hidden assets of the Marcos family and their cronies.

Because of this, they said, the documents were deemed to have acquired public records status which exempted them from the rule on evidence that made authentication mandatory.

The lawyers also said the court's ruling denied the government's right to due process since they (the Marcos children) were the heirs of their parents' estates.

In its Dec. 6 ruling, the Sandiganbayan upheld the government's case against former first lady Imelda R. Marcos but said the government had failed to present evidence to show that her children and Araneta had played a part in amassing ill-gotten wealth.

The court junked the affidavits of Marcos associates submitted as evidence by the PCGG against the Marcos children and Araneta on the grounds they were photocopies and the originals were not presented for perusal.

In addition, the affiants were never called to the stand to confirm the contents of their depositions; hence the court ruled in favor of the defendants, it said. *Nelson E. Flores*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

More kids fall ill to bird flu in Turkey

DOGUBAYAZIT, TURKEY—TURKISH OFFICIALS STRUGGLED TO contain an epidemic of avian influenza among flocks of poultry on Saturday, galvanized by the deaths of three children from the H5N1 virus and news that two more were infected.

The World Health Organization said on Saturday it had confirmed that two children hospitalized in Turkey were infected with the H5N1 strain, making four confirmed human cases in Turkey, the sixth country where the bird flu strain has jumped from poultry to people.

Two teenaged siblings in eastern Turkey died from the virus earlier this week and WHO was checking tests on their 11-year-old sister, who

died and who also tested positive for bird flu.

The virus has been spreading since October among flocks in Turkey, having moved west from Southeast Asia, but no people in Turkey had been reported infected until this week.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan asked Turks not to hide poultry to escape bird flu culls but residents of eastern Turkey said efforts to control the outbreak were disorganized.

"We apply to the officials but they don't come to take our chickens. I cannot bring them myself. I have no money," a middle-aged man said in Dogubayazit, the town where the dead children lived, near the Armenian and Iranian borders.

A Reuters reporter saw chickens still walking on the streets and some escaping just before they were carried in large bags to be buried alive in pits.

Erdogan said the government was taking all necessary measures and allocating funds to combat the spread of the disease, CNN Turk reported.

"Peoples' losses will be compensated. Nobody will be allowed to suffer losses," he told reporters late on Friday. **Reuters**



A MUSLIM pilgrim waits outside a hospital in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, Jan. 7. For many Muslims, the hajj—one of Islam's five pillars—signals their spiritual rebirth and the burial of past transgressions. **AP**

'Bigfoot' fever grips Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR—Excitement is mounting in Malaysia over claims of "Bigfoot" lurking in its southern jungles, with wildlife experts on the hunt for the mythical beast and a telephone hotline set up to report sightings.

Bigfoot fever erupted last month when some fish farm workers claimed to have spotted three of the beasts—two adults and a youngster—on the edge of a forest reserve in southern Johor state.

Their improbable tale was lent some authority soon after when an Orang Asli—an indigenous ethnic group known for their expertise in the jungle—also said he had stumbled across one of the legendary ape-men.

"He saw the creature which was hairy and brownish in color, it was about 12 feet tall," said Johor National Parks director Hashim Yusoff.

"It was not aggressive, but the Orang Asli was startled by the creature and ran away."

"My personal feeling is that there is a possibility it could be what we call in Malaysia the 'mawas'—more of a primate," he said. "But we don't deny the sightings," he added, insisting that the Orang Asli "do not lie."

"We've got to prove it and we've got to do it scientifically."

Wildlife authorities have embarked on a quest to verify the claims, and are considering mounting camera traps to capture images of anything roaming the jungles.

After a month of fruitless searching and interviews with people living near the forests, a telephone hotline has now been set up for members of the public who claim to have seen the beast to relate their stories, Hashim said.

"Our main aim is to identify the information source, whether it is credible or not," he said. **AFP**

Saudi on alert as 2.5M pilgrims start Mecca trek

MINA, SAUDI ARABIA—AN ESTIMATED 2.5 million Muslim pilgrims began the annual trek Sunday from the holy city of Mecca to the valley of Mina with Saudi authorities on high alert to prevent another tragedy.

The pilgrimage rites, known as hajj, start three days after an aging hostel in the heart of Mecca collapsed, killing 76 people and wounding 62.

Rescue operations ended Friday and the rubble of the Luluat al-Kheir (Pearl of Grace) hostel was removed to allow a sea of pilgrims to flow from Mecca to Mina, some five km to the east, to begin tracing the journey made by Prophet Mohammed more than 1,400 years ago.

Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for all devout, able-bodied Muslims with the means for the journey.

Men and women of all age, color and nationality dressed in white robes and sandals started

Marching on foot or boarded buses to Mina after dawn prayers.

They will spend the day known as "Yawm at-Tarwiyah" in prayers and meditation, sleeping at night in fire-proof tents before heading further south on Monday to Mt. Arafat for the climax of hajj.

Balloons and national flags fluttered above the white tents covering the arid valley to guide pilgrims.

Some were already in Mina on Friday, camping in portable tents under bridges or on curbsides despite signs everywhere warning against loitering.

Hundreds of security force members in military fatigues fanned out in the area while Asian laborers in orange jumpsuits swept the streets.

Even some of those wounded in Thursday's building collapse will leave their hospital beds and go to Mina in specially-equipped ambulances that will then transport them to Arafat, said a senior health official. **AFP**

'Day of truth' for Sharon

JERUSALEM—DOCTORS TREATING Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon were due on Sunday to make a decision on when to try to bring him out of a medically induced coma and assess the extent of brain damage from a severe stroke.

Surgeons at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, where the 77-year-old has been under sedation and on a respirator since Wednesday's stroke, said there is a good chance he will survive though it is unclear how much his faculties have been impaired.

"Tomorrow is the day of truth," neurosurgeon Jose Cohen told Channel 2 television late on Saturday.

Hospital spokesperson Ron Kroner told reporters on Sunday there had been no change in Sharon's condition overnight, that it "remains critical but stable" as it has since emergency surgery was conducted on Friday to staunch bleeding in his brain.

Doctors would soon convene "to determine the course for continued

treatment," and could decide whether or not to bring him out of sedation, Kroner said.

Shlomo Mor-Yosef, the hospital director had said Saturday that the latest brain scan showed evidence of a slight improvement in Sharon's condition.

"We as human beings are optimistic," he told reporters. "But I cannot say that the prime minister has come out of danger... there are very slight signs of improvement."

Cohen said Sharon's chances of survival were "very high."

But Cohen stressed in remarks to Channel 2 television that Sharon would not be unscathed: "To say that after a severe impact like this one there would not be cognitive problems is just not acknowledging reality."

Doctors also said there was no guarantee Sharon would regain consciousness even when his sedation was lifted. Hospital officials said an additional update on his condition would be given at about noon. **Reuters**

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MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2006

Iraq, not Afghanistan, now seen as terror center

SINGAPORE—IRAQ HAS REPLACED Afghanistan as the nerve center of global terrorism by militant groups whose ability to regenerate, despite setbacks, means that suicide bombings and other mass-casualty attacks remain a serious danger in 2006, analysts say.

Three major developments are likely to define the security landscape this year, Singapore-based terrorism analyst Rohan Gunaratna told a forum organized by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) last week.

"The first is that al-Qaida has morphed or transformed from a small group into a terrorist movement," he told diplomats, academics, officials and business executives.

"So today the threat is not so much from one single organization called al-Qaida but from the global jihad movement."

Gunaratna, head of terrorism re-

search at the Singapore-based Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, said governments must "prepare for a challenge posed by a number of disparate groups" waging campaigns on the global, regional and local levels.

"The second most significant development we have seen is that the center of gravity of international terrorism has shifted from Afghanistan to Iraq," he said. "Iraq is the new land of jihad."

"Like we saw the last generation of jihadists coming from Afghanistan, we will see the next generation of jihadists will come from Iraq."

The US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 that ousted the fundamentalist Taliban regime resulted in the dismantling of al-Qaida training bases there.

Al-Qaida's leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was moving to establish a global terrorist network from Iraq similar to the way Osama

bin Laden had done from Afghanistan, Gunaratna said.

The third significant development was the deepening cooperation among various militant groups worldwide, Gunaratna said.

In Southeast Asia, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) remained a long-term threat, said Jakarta-based terrorism analyst Sidney Jones, Southeast Asia project director of the think tank the International Crisis Group.

JI had split into two—the mainstream JI with an estimated membership of about 1,000, and a radical faction called the JI Thorifah Muqotilah with 30 to 50 members bent on carrying out suicide attacks—Jones told the ISEAS forum.

Mainstream JI leaders were opposed to indiscriminate bombing and their main goal was the establishment of an Islamic state in the region, Jones said.

AFP

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WORLD BRIEFS

UN commander shoots self

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—The Brazilian commander of UN peacekeepers in Haiti was found dead on the balcony of his hotel room Saturday in an apparent suicide, authorities said. A blow to the 9,000-strong force and efforts to restore democracy in Haiti, UN officials and Haitian police swarmed the upscale Hotel Montana where Lt. Gen. Lirano Teixeira da Matta Bacelar was slumped on a ledge against the balcony.

BACELLAR REUTERS

blood staining his white T-shirt. Outwardly calm and reflective, Bacelar was charged with restoring order to this Caribbean nation in the wake of the February 2004 bloody rebellion that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Found wearing boxer shorts and sandals, Bacelar apparently killed himself as the multinational force is under increased pressure to curb violence in the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation. The security situation has been unraveling in past weeks, with a rash of kidnappings hitting the capital, international election workers, journalists and ordinary Haitians have been among the victims. AP

North Korea war prisoners

SEOUL—Stalinist North Korea is demanding billions of dollars in compensation for alleged atrocities against prisoners of war and spies formerly held in South Korea, according to state media. The North filed an unprecedented formal damages complaint to the South's human rights commission through a border office on Friday, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. The complaint insisted Seoul compensate former North Korean long-term prisoners for their time at "nightmarish prisons" run by former authoritarian governments in South Korea. "The physical damage, except mental damage done to them, stands at \$1 billion even according to a preliminary estimate made by specialists of the DPRK (North Korea) in line with international practice," it said on Saturday. "It would come to several billions of US dollars... if the damage done to all those unconverted long-term prisoners killed in prisons is put together." South Korea repatriated 63 North Korean long-term prisoners, mostly prisoners of war and spies who refused to abjure communism, in 2000 after a reconciliation summit with North Korea. AFP

DeLay renounces post

WASHINGTON—US Representative Tom DeLay, a close political ally of President George W. Bush who is mired in a campaign finance controversy, said Saturday he was definitively renouncing the post of Republican majority leader in the House of Representatives. "The job of majority leader is too important to be hamstrung by personal distractions," DeLay declared in front of television cameras in his home district in Texas as he confirmed his decision to abandon the post of majority leader. But the congressman, who has led the Republican majority in the House with an iron hand for three years, also said he will be running for reelection in legislative elections that will take place in November 2006. DeLay, known as "the Hammer" for maintaining party discipline, was forced to temporarily relinquish his leadership post in September, after he was charged with violations of Texas election laws and with money laundering. AFP



DELAY AP

Japan snowfall kills 63

TOKYO—Troops and volunteers in Japan shoveled snow from roads and roofs on Sunday as the death toll from the country's heaviest snowfall on record rose to more than 63. Teams of troops tried to clear snow that had piled up to more than three meters in some of the worst-hit areas of Niigata prefecture and to reopen blocked roads in Nagano prefecture. Reuters

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Economic lies

THE BROADSIDE SEN. MANUEL ROXAS II FIRED AT the Arroyo administration's flotilla of economic half-truths was overdue and corrective. Unchallenged, the administration policy of overemphasizing what Roxas calls "headline statistics" can, in fact, be both risky and misleading. But a closer look at the senator's own assumptions reveals his powder isn't all dry either.

He may be as populist as the policy he is attacking.

EDITORIAL Let us be clear. The administration policy, of trumpeting macro-economic gains without regard for context or the nuances of implementation, must be denounced. As we have already pointed out before, the President's fixation with the strengthening of the peso is unhealthy—because she does not care to specify the peso's optimum level, because she speaks as though a continued appreciation of the currency is an unalloyed good, because she does not discuss the higher cost of our exports and the lowered purchasing power of our OFW families, caused (of course) by the strengthening of the peso.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, in other words, is playing politics with the economic statistics. Roxas, the scion of the immensely wealthy Araneta-Roxas clans and a Wall Street investment banker before returning to the country to enter politics, thinks the President and her economic managers are playing with fire—not because the statistics in question are a tissue of lies, but because the celebration is decidedly premature.

"The headline statistics being trumpeted by the government are good [by this, he means the stronger peso, the higher stock exchange index, the better bond rates] and yet everybody is feeling lousy and their sales reflect this lousiness," Roxas said. "The anecdotal feedback from the business community, from small traders to large corporations, [shows] that it has been a joyless Christmas, a joyless economy."

Why? Because the "real" effects of the headline statistics still have to be felt. "It's like we are looking at the sky and see a good alignment of stars foretelling a bountiful harvest even though the croplands have yet to be farmed," Roxas said.

"Her economic managers must guard against the folly of applying the US model to our economy. In the US, when these factors are up, there are immediately felt in the real economy because there are no bottlenecks. It's not like here where it takes a lot more work, assertiveness and engagement by government to convert these factors into real output," he explained.

So far, so clear. Roxas' bottom line is that these macro-economic numbers need to be translated into terms that the ordinary citizen can instinctively understand. "The government must be more assertive in both its policy and approach to bring down these headline statistics into the real economy—a strong peso into lower prices of basic commodities and services; a strong stock market into more public offerings, and low bond prices to lower housing and car loans."

Now for the hard part. Like other senators who have presumed to speak on the real meaning (or the lack of it) of the economy's undeniable growth, Roxas glosses over the essential fact of our underdevelopment: It would take years of sustained high GDP rates (say, six years of 6 percent growth) before the ordinary citizen can "feel" the impact in ordinary life. To argue that the growth last year or the improvement last quarter isn't real because it hasn't been felt today is to ignore (or to be unaware of) plain economic truths. But the real populist core of the senator's position lies in his unstated assumption that everything depends on the government. "Aside from crowing about how good the peso or stocks are, the government should tell the people how it will work to fulfill them"—that is, how it intends to meet its "main task" of ensuring that the good news promised by the bracing headline statistics becomes reality.

That cannot be right. The government is not a corporation; its main task is to govern, not to run a business. It is not its main responsibility to turn headlines into bottom lines. The last time we looked, that was the responsibility of business. Lower prices of basic goods? Ask the retailers in Farmers Market. More stock offerings? Maybe the new businesses in thriving Cubao can lead the way.



ConCom inserted provision benefiting members

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE ARE WASTING so much attention on the draft Constitution written by the Consultative Commission (ConCom), whose members were handpicked by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In the first place, GMA has no legal authority to create a body to write a new Constitution. So the ConCom has no legal authority to even be there. Ergo, what it wrote is just a scrap of paper; it should be thrown into the nearest wastebasket.

The only bodies authorized to write a Constitution is either Congress as a Constituent Assembly or a Constitutional Convention elected for that purpose. There are about 250 congressmen and 23 senators, all of whom think they are God's gift to the Philippines and are talented lawmakers. Do you think they will accept a draft Charter written by "amateurs"? No, they will want to write their own Constitution. It's the same thing with a Constitutional Convention. It will write its own Charter. And there will be no Constituent Assembly. The agreement of the Senate is needed to constitute it and almost all the senators don't want it.

Secondly, the parliamentary/federal system of government provided in the ConCom Charter is not the answer to our problems as the pro-Cha-cha people would make us believe. A parliamentary system is too expensive for a Third World country like us. Considering the quality—or lack of it—of our politicians, there will be frequent dissolution of Parliament, which will lead to new elections that cost a lot of money. The election of the prime minister alone is going to be very expensive—both for the taxpayers and the financial backers of the candidates for PM—as the price of each vote of the Members of Parliament (MPs) could run into the millions of pesos. Where do you think the PM candidates will get that?

Local government officials are blinded by the prospect of autonomy in a federal system. But with very few exceptions, all of the provinces will not be able to support them-

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



Confronted with such a situation, the federal governments might just "squeeze" their constituents for more taxes, just to make both ends meet. You, voters, should better remember that when you vote in the plebiscite—in the remote possibility that the draft Charter reaches that stage.

The situation is different in the United States. The states there are progressive and big. California and Texas alone are about the size of Luzon and they are very rich economically. Most of the other states are also economically independent. Even so, the federal government sometimes has to help them in their rescue operations during times of emergency.

Thirdly, the Charter written by the ConCom is selfish and self-serving. Politicians like it because the parliamentary system gives them more powers. The MPs become both legislators and executive officials and choose members of the judiciary. There is no balance of powers. The party in power runs the whole government like a dictator.

In the Charter being peddled to us, the President can appoint 30 of her favorites to the Parliament. And members of the ConCom are not barred from being appointed as MPs. So you see, the ConCom members inserted in the Charter some provisions that will benefit themselves. They must have learned that trick from President Marcos himself, whose own Constitution provided that members of the Constitutional Convention who voted for the new Constitution automatically become members of the new Parliament. It is standard in any Constitution to ban members of the body that wrote it from benefiting from it. It's the

same standard that bans the members of Congress from enjoying salary increases approved by them. Such benefits are applicable only after their own terms have expired. This is to prevent them from legislating benefits for themselves. But the present members of the ConCom wrote this particular provision that could benefit themselves.

The new Charter also abolished term limits and the provision against family dynasties. So you see, the ConCom members wrote the Charter for the benefit of politicians!

And the unkindest cut of all, the draft Constitution is morally and ethically bankrupt. It uses bribery to make it acceptable. It bribes all incumbent officials with a bonus of three more years in office without being elected. That is to make all public officials—the senators, congressmen, governors, mayors, board members and councilors—campaign for the ratification of the ConCom's Constitution. It would benefit them. That is why local government officials are shamelessly pushing the Cha-cha. If the Senate does not agree to a Constitutional Assembly, they plan to use the "People's Initiative" provided in the Constitution, even if there is yet no law to implement it.

And as an added bonus to the senators—who are overwhelmingly against a parliamentary system—there is a provision that automatically makes them MPs. Such shameless and callous bribery!

Finally, the draft Charter seeks to deprive the people of the right to choose their chief executive. It will be the MPs, not the people, who will elect the prime minister, whose office is the equivalent to that of our President today. All that the people will do is to elect the MPs to represent their districts. They will become "nobodies" in the selection of their prime minister. That's something that will be left solely to the politicians.

In the remote possibility that a plebiscite is held to ratify the new Constitution, you know what you should do. Vote "No"! And convince others to do the same.

Explaining a few things

PABLO NERUDA HAS A POEM TITLED "I'M Explaining a Few Things." It goes in part:

"And one morning the bonfires/ leapt out of the earth/ devouring human beings/ and from then on fire/ gunpowder from then on/ and from then on blood..."

"Traitorous generals/ see my dead house/ look at broken Spain/ from every house burning metal flows/ instead of flowers/ from every socket of Spain/ Spain emerges/ and from every dead child a rifle with eyes/ and from every crime bullet are born/ which will one day find/ the bull's eye of your hearts."

"And you will ask: why doesn't his poetry/ speak of dreams and leaves/ and the great volcanoes of his native land"

"Come and see the blood in the streets/ Come and see/ the blood in the streets/ Come and see the blood/ in the streets!"

The playwright Harold Pinter quoted this poem in his speech last month in accepting the Nobel Prize for literature. In his speech Pinter ferociously indicted the United States for crimes against humanity, which have been reduced to invisibility by the narcotic effects of language. "It's a scintillating stratagem. Language is actually employed to keep thought at bay. The words 'the American people' (uttered by American officials) provide a truly voluptuous cushion of reassurance. You don't need to think. Just lie back on the cushion. The cushion may be suffocating your intelligence and your critical faculties but it's very comfortable."

I will not dwell on that speech. I will merely urge the reader to look it up in the Internet. It has some luminous portions on the concept of truth and a writer's responsibility toward it.

But I remembered Neruda's poem in the light of some of my own readers telling me they've been missing the "lighter" and "more inspiring" stuff I used to write about, and asking when I would write about them again. What can I say? The first thing I think about in response to this are the words of Ecclesiastes, which say, "To everything, there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



Then follows a recitation of the various things there is time for: a time to sow, a time to reap, a time to grieve, a time to rejoice, a time to live, a time to die, etc. Well, there is a time to listen to poets talk about love and a time to hear them explain a few things. There is a time for columnists to speak of dreams and leaves and the volcanoes of their land, and there is a time for them to see the blood in the streets.

The blood in our streets is there. That might not be the very literal blood shed by a very literal war, but it is copious blood as well, shed by the war being waged against everything we hold dear. Our values, our patrimony, our very being as a nation. These are difficult times, these are troubled times. These are times of murder and mayhem, of the strangling of the sovereign will of the voters, of the stifling of angry voices, of the voiding of all that is decent and fair. These are times of cynicism and despair, of a growing indifference to injustice, of a rising capacity to tolerate abuse, of an expanding ability to factor in the worst in us. What do you do in the face of this, believing that language can be employed either as a weapon of self-defense or as a scintillating stratagem to keep thought at bay?

I myself have always put it this way: More often than not, you do not choose your topics, your topics choose you. Who wants to write about pain and suffering when you can write about sunsets and sails unfurling in the wind? Yet you write about pain and suffering because they are there. Because you are a witness to them. Because not all the sails and sunsets will make them go away.

Inspiring is a curious word. Uplifting is a

strange word. Among Zen Buddhists, the truly inspiring and uplifting flower is not the rose, it is the water lily. What makes the water lily inspiring and uplifting is not its superior aesthetic attributes, it is the fact that it thrusts out in all splendor from the mud and the fetid water that surrounds it. It is the sheer drama of its struggle, pushing out from the rot that defines its stark beauty.

So it is in life. Years ago, a group of OFWs in Singapore complained that "Probe," which was airing intermittently in that country, was giving Filipinos a bad name because it dwelt on such topics as pedophilia, the mountain of garbage in Payatas, corruption in government. The group demanded that the program give a more "positive face" to the country. They missed the point completely. I thought the program, notwithstanding its predilections, did the country proud. It showed at least that there were still Filipinos who cared deeply about their country they wanted something done about its problems. It showed at least that the country continued to have a free press, which was something that could not be said about the OFWs' place of exile. It showed at least that there were Filipino journalists who were still serious about their work and had not succumbed to doing PR. Surely that was inspiring? Surely that was uplifting?

What is inspiring is not peace and prosperity. It is the struggle of a people to attain them. What is uplifting is not the grand vistas of nature, it is the human spirit soaring above them. You are vexed by the sounds of discord and remonstrations issuing from the mouth of angry men? You should thank God there are still enough of them that care deeply about the country, that have not given up on it and believe something can still be done about it. Like I said, inspiring and uplifting are curious words, they are strange words.

Why do I write about the things I do today? Come and see the blood in the streets. Come and see the blood in the streets. Come and see the blood in the streets.

Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma

THE DEATH OF FORMER JUSTICE CECILIA Muñoz-Palma marks another step in the gradual passing away of the major characters instrumental in the restoration of democracy. But even as we grieve her loss, we also rejoice in that God gave the nation a public servant who, in the words of Scripture, was a *mulier fortis*, a valiant woman.

As the first woman justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, she distinguished herself not only by her command of the intricacies of the law but more specially by her devotion to the majesty of the law and her heroic defense of constitutional rights even to the point of defying the reigning President. She capped her political career with her election as president of the 1986 Constitutional Commission which drafted the current Constitution whose strongest legacy is its Bill of Rights.

So much has already been said and written about her courage, her brilliance and her integrity. Nevertheless, I would like to offer my tribute to her by recalling two difficult moments in her life. These were moments, perhaps, not well known to many, but which she shared with me as she struggled through them.

The first happened before she assumed her position as Supreme Court justice. One morning, she came to my office in the Ateneo Law School in Padre Faura, distraught and in tears about a communication she had just received. She was then an associate justice of the Court of Appeals and she had just been informed of her forthcoming appointment to the Supreme Court. But there was a condition—the appointment was forthcoming on condition of “absolute loyalty.” We talked about the implications of that condition. In the end, the conclusion she finally reached was that the condition of “absolute loyalty” was invalid and that, therefore, she could and should accept the appointment as a call to perform a mission. She saw it as a vocation within a vocation. We know very well how nobly and how courageously she performed that mission.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.



A second trying moment for her came in early September of 1974, on the eve of the Supreme Court decision on the habeas corpus petition of Jose W. Diokno. She had produced a draft of a dissenting opinion which, in the judgment of some of her colleagues, could destroy the image of the President in the international scene. She was even grilled—“roasted” was the word she used—by some of her more senior colleagues during a Court session. The pressure on her to tone down her language was so strong that she felt compelled to go in hiding so she could finish her final draft. While the phones were frantically ringing in her office and in her house, she was working with a borrowed typewriter in the house of her son Tadeo in Marikina. After she completed her draft and after sending it to the Chief Justice, she stayed for a while with the Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica while she waited for the release of the decision. We know, however, that before the decision could be released, Diokno himself was released.

It is not difficult to imagine that the leakage of her dissent had an influence on the sudden release of Diokno. Even Justice Claudio Teehankee said to her, “Celing, I salute you; I do not know how our decision leaked.” Justice Enrique Fernando came to her saying, “Celing, you are the heroine of the hour.” Justice Calixto Zaldivar for his part said, “What shall we do now with our dissenting opinion?” Justice Zaldivar had joined in the dissenting opinion with a handwritten concurrence.

The last paragraph of her original dissenting

opinion is not what appears in the published Supreme Court Reports. I say “original” because she made some modifications after Diokno was released. But this is how she originally concluded:

“In closing, I am bothered by the thought that some of my Colleagues may attribute my approach to Diokno’s petition to my being a woman, and I may even be accused of allowing my emotions to overpower my reason. If there is such an assumption I would say that it is incorrect. However, if it is indeed true that my being a woman led me to take this stand on Diokno’s petition, then I am happy and proud that I was born a woman.”

Finally, we might ask, from where did she get such womanly courage? She herself has supplied the answer. For several years she was a fixture in the choir loft of the Ateneo Padre Faura St. Thomas More Chapel, where she liked to accompany the choir in the organ. I was the chaplain then, and I used to refer to her as my bishop. It was on the occasion of her grappling with the Diokno petition that she sent me a note which revealed the not so secret source of her courage. She said in part: “I thought of writing to you, you being the chaplain of St. Thomas More Chapel where I spent much of my time seeking from Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament guidance, moral strength and courage to make the right decision in the habeas corpus cases more particularly that of petitioner Jose W. Diokno . . .” The note came with a copy of her original dissent with the concurrence of Justice Zaldivar, together with a manuscript copy of her narration of the events of that fateful September. She requested me to dispose of the manuscript according to my best judgment at an appropriate time. This has since been published together with her other writings in her book “The Mirror of My Soul.”

Justice Palma stood tall with her heroic dissent in the Diokno case. She followed that with other valiant dissenting opinions. She has gone to claim her well-deserved reward.

Christmas Eve 2005

AT THE LAST MINUTE, I CALLED MY MOTHER TO TELL HER that I won’t be going home for Christmas. I was not able to get any ticket and was too tired to take my chances at the airport or at the pier. Always understanding, she said that it was OK. But she made me promise not to go out on Christmas Eve, to avoid any harm.

Luckily, a good friend also happened to be staying in Manila for Christmas. Determined to make our Christmas Eve away from our families a blast, I asked for his suggestion. His reply was unexpected. Let us give food to the street dwellers!

It was enough to make anyone who had been thinking along the lines of going on a food and drinking binge cry in disbelief and disappointment. God knows I was not going to have the same luxury when work and law classes resumed.

Babi is a former seminarian who would have made a great priest had he not left the seminary, so his suggestion should not have come as a surprise. But it’s really an unusual way of spending Christmas Eve, to put it mildly. Besides, I had promised my mother that I’d stay away from harm. Thus it was with some reluctance that I agreed to join him because he seemed sure of what he wanted to do.

We bought nine packs of fried-chicken meals from the nearest fast-food outlet. At the counter, there was a boy, one of those we often see along Katipunan, “guiding” drivers for a fee as they park their cars. He wanted to buy a sundae, but he was being ignored by the cashiers. I had to tell them to attend to him.

That to me was illustrative of the way our society deals with the poor, which is to not deal with them. Just look at the tens of thousands of families displaced by overpriced government infrastructure projects. The affected poor families have no say on their relocation at all. Their lives are in the hands of others who hardly care.

At 11:30 p.m., we embarked on our mini-relief effort along the dim Aurora Avenue. We had not even reached Aurora when we saw a man eating from an old Tortillas chips foil pack near the flyover going to Eastwood. Babi gave him one pack.

Along Aurora, the first persons we gave food to were two men sleeping in their pushcarts. The sound of our steps must have awakened them and, from the frightened looks on their faces, they must have expected some malefactors, or worse MMDA people. We gave them two packs and wished them a Merry Christmas.

Not too far from the two men was an old man scavenging for scraps. We gave him one pack and our Christmas greetings. Only then did we realize that it was past 12, and we greeted each other a Merry Christmas with some nervous laughter over our adventure.

The next person we found was sleeping in a fetal position on the steps of a hardware store near the Anonas MRT station, unmindful of the special night. We agreed not to wake him up and left a box beside him. Later we thought that we should have awakened him up because he might have slept on an empty stomach.

At the overpass that squares the Edsa-Aurora intersection, we had to wade through a sea of prostituted women. I thought my head would fall from too much vigorous shaking to make them understand that we were not there for that kind of adventure.

The world’s oldest profession knows no holiday! Perhaps; it’s because hunger and poverty, the world’s oldest scourge that drive most of them to this kind of work, know no holiday either.

Finally, we reached the area of Cubao where the bus stations are. There, we saw one of the most unexpectedly joyous scenes: three young ladies, like the three magi, distributing food to street dwellers. Babi and I were not the weirdest people in the planet, after all!

Then a more serious thought came to me: If Jesus were to be born today, it would most likely be either in Payatas, the relocation sites or the dark alleys of Cubao under the poorest conditions just like the first Christmas, telling us from the very beginning that he came not to amass wealth or power but to serve. Very much unlike our country’s leaders, most of whom are avowed Christians who regularly credit their closeness to God for their political survival as if they knew how God’s mind works. In fact, in this country, especially in the more recent past, it has always been a year of the dog (my apologies to the dogs).

Seeing that the three young ladies were taking care of the Cubao area, we hopped into a bus going to Philcoa. At the overpass, we saw an old woman with three little boys sleeping behind her on the floor. We gave her the four packs left.

It was past 1 in the morning when we got home. I am grateful for that experience even though our attempt was amateurish and extremely small-scale. In my work, I have been taught to always think of the long term, of sustainable strategies. That, I was told, is the real developmental mind-set. Doles are always frowned upon.

While that may be right, we all also have this very natural human desire to do something more direct for those who need help, for those who do not have the privilege of stopping to take stock of their lives at year-end holidays because each second is a matter of life and death for them. One cannot just turn a blind eye by saying that she is already doing her part in the greater scheme of things by doing her best in her chosen profession.

Let us hope that in the new year, there will be less poverty, more shelter for the homeless, social and economic recovery for the thousands who have been displaced by government projects and calamities, and food on the table for all.

As for the political dogs, I hope the people will finally tame them.

Is the Church listening?

ARCHBISHOP FERNANDO CAPALLA’S PROPOSAL for a Bishops-Congressmen’s Forum is intriguing but not because of the prospect of the bishops and the congressmen getting together. The latter fails to excite. I agree with Rep. Edcel Lagman: Congressmen, deep in even their suppressed consciences, know what is right and wrong. Many of them just persist in being corrupt. Their pork barrel is a sure sign that they’re recidivist and incorrigible. What’s the use?

Besides, I suspect that if the bishops want the forum, it’s for the “moral” issues such as population management, family planning, divorce, the gay issue, etc. But so vital are these issues that they should be discussed where they happen—with the people. That’s why I agree with Rina J. David’s suggestion for a Bishops-Faithful Forum, instead.

Rina mentions a word which to me is the most intriguing of all. The word is a refrain dropped in conversations and in articles here and abroad. It’s the repeated plea to the institutional Church to “listen” to the faithful. What’s new, some say. Hasn’t the Church always been listening? Good question.

Long ago parents didn’t know how to listen. They disciplined, downwards. Teachers didn’t know how to listen. They taught, downwards. Now, the other half of education and caring is listening, like peers. You’d be surprised what children and students can contribute. If I were a teacher now, I’d reserve time for questions, no holds barred. What I could have learned!

How good is the Church at listening and how free are the faithful to ask? Like parents and teachers, the Church may have to learn how to listen—seriously, deeply, openly and generously. It doesn’t come naturally, especially for an institution that for centuries has been used to tell people what to obey, what to avoid and what to believe, overdoing a one-way teaching ministry. In Apologetics class, our beloved chaplain and teacher

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

used to wave off any hand raised—with “no, no questions.” Up till now, how many priests, religious and laypersons lower their voices with safety clauses like, “I can’t say this in public, but . . .”?

How persistent and impassioned is the plea to the Church to listen? Listen. “Mission” includes a “willingness to listen.” A Church that cannot openly discuss issues is a Church retreating into “an intellectual ghetto.” The “Church structure offers few settings for honest talk.”

“Speak up, but to whom and how?”

Pope Benedict will have to show a willingness to engage modern thinkers and concerns rather than denouncing them . . . the Church . . . must be willing to listen . . .

“The Pope should be willing to listen and engage the lay leadership . . . must have ‘the ability to listen’ as leader and servant. ‘Hear the cries of the whole Church.’”

“The Pope should first listen to the excluded ones . . . for it is there that God’s call to the entire Church is first made audible.”

“... invite to the Vatican the 100 Catholics who were once considered the Church’s major critics . . . like Hans Kung, Charles Curran, Leonardo Boff and Andrew Greeley.”

“Consult all the faithful about what they think God is up to in the Church and in the world.” Something can indeed be said about what the faithful think about. It’s called *sensus fidelium*, “the sense of faith that the people of God share among themselves,” a criteria, by the way, in the formulation of doctrine.

In the Church’s highly centralized set-up, as

the Pope goes, so goes the Church.

So, how much or how little does our Church know us? “My parents don’t know me.” *Hindi ako kilala* are painful words played out to parents who do not listen. Can “parents” and “Church” be interchanged?

Listen then to the “excluded” and the “outsider”: the divorced, separated, living in, gays and lesbians; the poor (trying very hard here but still confounded), women (their genius still held at bay); marginalized and silenced priests, former seminarians and married priests (what a great waste considering their training, number, willingness to serve and the steady retreat of vocations). Does the Church know only the ideal “order of society” and not enough of its deep disorders, the tectonic shifts under our feet?

Listen to the “engaged and knowledgeable laity” that could be “the Church’s strong suit.” Listen to the critics of the Church who have not surrendered their brains and would rather be “Independent-minded churchgoers” rather than mere “functionaries of apparatuses” (a phrase used by the Pope himself), a type he says the Church needs little of. Has the Church “historically taken a dim view of the questioning intellect, and especially of the public expression of such questions?”

Listen to common exchanges on family life. Why, in every other Catholic family, is there a broken marriage, a live-in, young women on pills (face it), men on condoms, a born-again, a free thinker, a fallen-away Catholic, young marrieds “quietly seceded from the Vatican’s control in sexual issues”? All of them are not subject for exclusion or denunciation but for discussion and/or acceptance. Listen. The pews have a lot to say.

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Parting wisdom

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



tution... Whether the supposed offense, the alleged acts constitute [an] impeachable offense or whether it can stand on the so-called hearsay evidence, are matters which need to be looked into by the proper constitutional body and not by the personal views of leaders in government and the private sector... Let us grab the bull by its horns rather than be dragged into a limbo of suspicions, disbelief, social discontent, mistrust, even violence and instability... We, as citizens living under the Rule of Law and enjoying the benefits of republicanism, are bound to respect, support it, notwithstanding our own personal views.”

Her two unpopular positions mark the final chapter in a long, distinguished, moral and intellectual life, and must serve to give us pause as we mark, this year, the fifth anniversary of Edsa II and Edsa III, the 20th anniversary of Edsa I, and the 19th—and, possibly, last—anniversary of the Constitution she signed as president of the Constitutional Commission. In her public statements, Justice Palma was careful to distinguish personal issues from issues; she was not, in any way, seen as a rabid partisan or critic of the two presidents involved (and, in fact, had been treated ungallantly by former President Estrada and was paid little attention by President Macapagal-Arroyo); she was no fawning toady of presidents.

Yet she dared ask: can we permit the constitutional order to give way to the public’s passions, as expressed in the streets? Her principal point was that a mature democracy operating under the rule of law—however much the expression was being used, and abused, by political partisans at the time—cannot afford to compromise either

constitution or legal procedure, if our society is to continue calling itself constitutional and democratic. The accusations, she pointed out, may be valid, and indeed, public feelings may be justified, but a responsible people are duty-bound to channel their emotions toward a resolution within the confines of the social contract.

Her views were more in keeping with the scathing opinions of foreign observers, and like many Filipinos, in the wake of Edsa II, I found them puzzling. By the beginning of the present political crisis, realizing in hindsight that the resolution of the Estrada crisis caused more problems than it solved, I was able to appreciate the wisdom behind her opinions more. Today, I think that in the twilight of her life, she managed to shine a light that, like any light, exposes the unsavory as much as it shows a path through the darkness.

What did she expose as unsavory? Our confusing an accident of history—the manner in which Ferdinand Marcos finally fell out of power in 1986—with a permanent strategy for democratic change. The removal of Marcos, a dictator, cannot be the means to remove presidents unless we are prepared to dismantle the entire system. In other words, there is no such thing as People Power that is constitutional. In a sense, those who advised President Aquino to scrap the 1973 Constitution knew this. (Justice Palma opposed the decision at the time.) And yet the light that shines forth from Justice Palma’s statements is encouraging: the only way forward, to accomplish change, whether the immediate desire to replace a discredited incumbent, or to institute structural reforms, is within the parameters of the Constitution. There is no substitute for the hard work, the painful and painstaking methods under our basic law, for resolving all things.

As the nation pays its final farewell to Justice Palma, it is time to adopt as our own the defining principle of her life: There are no quick fixes; there is no substitute for following the difficult, because the people signed on to strict, contractual obligations when they ratified the 1987 Charter.

THEY SAID

Poor competition

“Cha-cha cannot compete with Christmas.”
—Sen. Ralph Recto, on the chances that the Senate would take up the resolution calling for Charter change

No rest for Bonifacio

“As long as the masses have no voice in the national discourse, and while social leadership remains the monopoly of the elite, perhaps Bonifacio’s soul may never rest.”

—Randy David, speaking at the 142nd birth anniversary of the Great Plebeian Andres Bonifacio

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GMA shot down strongest argument for Cha-cha

THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT AGAINST Charter change comes from Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself. By milking dry the propaganda value of the peso's late surge versus the US dollar, GMA has debunked the premises she herself laid out in her July 2004 State of the Nation Address (Sona) in pushing for Cha-cha. In that address, she drew a picture of two Philip-

pine—one, an economy poised for takeoff; the other, a degenerated political system hindering such takeoff. Until today, we remain under the same system, but she proudly proclaims "the runway is clear and the takeoff is at hand."

In the context of that Sona, the statement is, at best, contradictory and, at its worst, a bagful of lies. If the "runway is (now) clear," this can only mean that the obstacle has been removed.

Therefore, Cha-cha has lost its usefulness.

To our politicians' credit, they have let the cat out of the bag. Before, they argued that Cha-cha was motivated by economics. Today, has any one of them taken time to discuss the purported economic benefits to be gained by the nation because of the amendments? I hardly have heard a peep from them. Much of the debate on Cha-cha revolves around their political future.

The Consultative Commission (ConCom) has baited the incumbents with the lure of automatic membership in the new unicameral legislature. What it actually proposes is for the congressmen to appoint themselves to an office they have created.

I do not think it proper for people to be "legislated" into office. Even the members of the 1978 Interim Batasang Pambansa were elected. (What could be worse than an election held under a dictatorship? Answer: a No-el in a democracy.) In 1986, the members of the Cory Aquino-appointed Constitutional Commission were barred from seeking an elective post in the election immediately succeeding the ratification of the Charter they framed—the same document this administration is impatient to revise.

Our bigger problem lies not in the institutions or the systems in place but the personalities who control them. More than the economic, social and political crises that engulf us is the crisis within each of us—characterized by our misplaced values and distorted priorities. This crisis is best personified by no less than the President herself. Indeed, we do get the government we deserve.

In pushing for reconciliation, the people are admonished to leave the past behind. The logic behind this call is much too flawed. We are in a sorry state precisely because we have forgotten our past. The ghosts of the past will only haunt us more as we strive to strike it off our collective memory.

Reconciliation does not require a silent, subservient opposition. It is founded not on apologies but on mutual respect, to agree to disagree and to treat critics with much more civility than we do our closest allies. If you think this is an impossible task, then any talk about reconciliation would be futile.

—JUSTINO CALAYCAY JR.,
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Responsive public service

I'M CURRENTLY HOLDING A POSITION in a student government and it has become my habit to ask students about what they think and need so we could improve the condition around us, as students, or would know how to do so. I do this by scheduling regular meetings and consultations with them.

Wouldn't it be nice and appropriate for our lawmakers to hold such meetings with the different sectors in their respective districts, especially with students (considering that it is them who would later on inherit and lead

the country)? This way the lawmakers would know what their constituents need and feel. Thus, the lawmakers would also know what to do, so that they can genuinely serve their people. After all, were they not voted precisely to serve the people?

I mean, this way, the people can measure the lawmakers' performance on the basis of what had been asked by them during the meetings and consultations.

—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER
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Elitist design in proposed Constitution

THE TIMING OF THE INQUIRER Dec. 20, 2005 editorial titled "Bonifacio and Estrada," which came out—whether by coincidence or by design—a few days after the Constitutional Consultative Commission made public its recommendations, was providential or masterful.

One recommendation would ban "dropouts" from political office. Behind the obviously inane but seemingly innocuous provision lurks the vested interest of the elite ("trapos" from both the opposition and administration; "civil society" and "leaders" of business and the academe).

The editorial cited a historian's research which noted the exis-

tence of internal forces seeking to perpetuate itself as the privileged in our society even during our struggles against external forces—then (Bonifacio) and recently (Estrada).

The campaign to amend the 1986 Constitution is an ill-disguised maneuver by the elite not just to preserve their leverage but even to advance their agenda at the majority's expense.

The media have a responsibility to the nation to lay bare this threat to our democracy and mobilize the silent majority to assert itself.

—ALFREDO V. ASUNCION,
93 Castrillo St.,
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Quezon City

Not media's fault that GMA is perceived to be corrupt

TONY KWOK, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's adviser on anti-corruption, reportedly has blamed the media for the political turmoil in the country. I wonder what induced Kwok to do such a thing. It certainly was beyond his role as GMA's anti-corruption adviser. Or were his words meant only for the ears of his employer? Was Kwok pressured to make the statement?

GMA's administration has no reason to complain about the media's treatment of news. After all, it has two television stations and a nationwide radio network, which is larger than any private media organization, not to mention Malacañang's generous budget for its information office. Whenever the Arroyo administration does something that is genuinely commendable and worth reporting, these news outlets can always take the lead, assuming that the good news is not reported by the private media.

The tragedy is that GMA relies

so much in image projection to cover for the shortcomings and crimes of her administration. Vast as the resources of her drumbeaters are, there is nothing they can pull out of the hat that impresses the public. To get a headache and throw up, one only has to listen to the newscasts and commentaries aired over government-controlled media.

On the other hand, to win media acclaim, GMA has only to order a serious investigation into the charges of extortion leveled by Mark Jimenez against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, or produce Joc-Joc Bolante so he will be made to appear in the Senate investigation on the fertilizer scam, or she can direct the Isap to come clean on the Garci wiretappers. Unfortunately, none of these is a price she is willing to pay!

—E.P. DAKANAY JR.,
43 Balazar St.,
Philamlife Village,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City

A red tape story in Cordillera

HERE'S A TIMELY ILLUSTRATION of red tape in the administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

I have been trying for the last two years to comply with the requirement of the Register of Deeds (ROD) in La Trinidad, Benguet (for the registration of the remaining 27 percent of a Cordillera lot, 73 percent of which is already owned by me, with a transfer certificate title in my name) that I first get a clearance from the Department of Agrarian Reform. I guess the idea is for me to show that no tenant-beneficiaries would be prejudiced. In other words, I have to show that the property is not covered by land reform.

For this purpose, the municipal agrarian reform officer (Maro) gave me a list of documents to submit before I could get the required ROD clearance. This included, among others, a topographic survey plan, photos of the property, ocular inspection report of the Maro and provincial agrarian reform officer (Paro), all of which must show that the property has a slope of less than 18 percent.

Is there tenancy at all in the Cordilleras? In these mountains, is there any property that has a gender slope than 18 percent? Nevertheless, I worked on producing the documents on the list. Not satisfied with its own requirements, the DAR asked me to submit a Department of Environment

and Natural Resources clearance to be issued by the community environment and natural resources office (Cenro). The purpose of this clearance is unclear.

The Cenro is supposed to give its findings to the Maro, which submits a complete folder of findings to the DAR regional office for approval. Of what, I cannot fathom.

It is obvious that the data required by the ROD has something to do with the DAR jurisdiction over the property. But there is no known tenancy relations in the Cordilleras. And it is so easy to see for any Maro and Paro, these mountains are definitely steeply sloping. Needless to say, the red tape in the Register of Deeds is simply ridiculous.

It took me several months—from mid-2003 to January 2004 to work out the tax payments on this transaction with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the municipal office of La Trinidad. Having overcome those tax hurdles, I am now facing the obstacles put up by the DAR. I feel like an equestrian in a dressage.

Matters are made worse for people who live in Metro Manila like me, who have to submit things by mail. I worked on the tax requirements by personally making trips to La Trinidad, this cost me a lot of time and money.

—BENEDICTO G. ARCINAS,
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Voices in the wilderness

I PITY THE INQUIRER COLUMNISTS. Despite all the incessant fire, fury and hatred they have directed at President Macapagal-Arroyo these past months (years?), she's still standing.

Their sarcastic and contemptuous writings mean nothing to a public so fed up with destructive politics that retards this country's efforts to move forward. They are howling voices in the empty wilderness and are no different from wolves that bay at the moon. Their columns are a perfect waste

of good newsprint that should have been devoted to more advertisements. It must be frustrating for these columnists to know that their words have no takers.

I suggest that the INQUIRER editors consider converting them to entertainment writers where they might just find a more sympathetic audience than us taxpayers who just want to move on away from all the cacophony of politics.

—ALDO ARZA,
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'Jueteng' back in Luzon, says top PNP exec

By Luigi A. del Puerto, in Manila
Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk
and Marlon Ramos, PDI S. Luzon Bureau

A POLICE OFFICIAL YESTERDAY confirmed attempts to revive the illegal numbers game "jueteng" in Luzon, except in one region.

"In every region in Luzon, there is an attempt to revive jueteng, except in Region 1 (Ilocos). We have not received reports on jueteng in this region," said the official, who refused to be named because of the sensitivity of his position.

The source said divulging his identity could make him the target of enmity not only of members of the jueteng syndicate but also his fellow officers.

"I'm not saying cops are behind it, but there are those who got used [to getting payoffs from the illegal numbers game]," he said.

The source, however, clarified that the moves to revive jueteng are not initiated by big-time financiers and operators; only bet collectors are testing the waters.

These jueteng operations are small-time, and the draws done in far-flung villages, he said.

In some cases, the collectors use the legal number game EZ2, which is sanctioned by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., as cover, according to the official.

Whenever the police's anti-illegal gambling task force is in town, collectors remit their bets to the EZ2 center. When it is not, they collect bets for jueteng draws.

"It's a game of cat and mouse," the source said.

The source hinted of leaks in the local police. In many instances when the national police coordinated raids with the local police, the police end up with nothing, he said.

Dry run

In Central Luzon, financiers, maintainers and operators of jueteng last week launched simultaneous dry-run operations of the illegal numbers game in Central Luzon seven months after its stoppage, Inquirer sources in the police said.

"The game has been resumed in the boundaries," a police official said, referring to the provincial borders shared by Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales.

The dry-run operations, the source said, were in preparation for jueteng's resumption on a full-scale.

The police source said the policy was to hold the draw at the boundaries and extend the collection of bets to the inner towns and cities.

Central Luzon police director Chief Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, however, said that as of Sunday, the region remained "negative" of jueteng, citing reports of his local commanders.

"I will not hesitate to take drastic action against my men if I confirm that jueteng has indeed returned," he said.

Lapinid sacked the police chiefs of Magalang and Guagua in Pampanga in November and December last year after raids by regional police teams confirmed "guerrilla" jueteng operations there.

At least two residents in Concepcion, Tarlac, sent text messages to the Inquirer on Sunday to report that collectors had been making the rounds of neighborhoods there and in nearby Magalang, Pampanga to collect bets.

Another source in Tarlac said the game was operating in Capas town.

But Tarlac police chief Senior Supt. Nicenor Bartolome said jueteng did not exist in his area.

Bartolome said the police were monitoring Tarlac to ensure that jueteng would be stopped.

The jueteng dry run began in Angeles City

on the first week of December but the police there denied this.

"Jueteng is operated alongside EZ2," the source said, referring to the game run by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, to provide a cover.

Jueteng and EZ2 both use a pair of numbers from 1-37 and 1-38, respectively.

The source said another policy in the trial phase of jueteng was to stop it when discovered by authorities or negotiate and get the police as protectors during a crackdown.

This was because not all police officials were talked into supporting the comeback of jueteng, the source said.

The source identified suspected gambling lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda as the main financier of the jueteng comeback in the region.

But Pineda, according to the source, used "decoys" to avoid being detected.

Neither Pineda nor his relatives could be reached for comment on Sunday. In earlier interviews, however, Pineda's relatives and associates have denied that Pineda had returned to finance big-time jueteng operations in the region.

Laguna

In Laguna, an Inquirer source said a mayor also has a direct command over jueteng operations in the third and fourth districts of the province.

Police officials, however, denied reports that jueteng has resurfaced in Laguna since the holiday season.

Laguna police director Senior Supt. Federico Terte said the police have stamped out jueteng activities in the province during their heightened operations four months ago.

"There is no jueteng in this province. I have also ordered my men to check reports that a man named Boy Royo runs jueteng in Laguna," Terte said in a phone interview.

Terte said they have continuously monitored the game in all towns in the province which allegedly showed Laguna is still jueteng-free.

He, however, admitted that there were reports of guerrilla jueteng operations in some areas of Laguna.

In guerrilla operations, winning number combinations are drawn outside the areas where bets were collected to elude policemen.

Calamba police chief Supt. Rolando Bustos said the city has remained jueteng-free and that some unscrupulous individuals could have been using the results of the lotto and EZ2 lotto draws, which are shown on television.

A bet collector earlier interviewed by the Inquirer in Barangay Halang in Calamba proved that jueteng has indeed been revived last December.

"Baka loteng yun a kaya EZ2. I am very sure that there is no collection of jueteng bets in Calamba because there is no jueteng here," Bustos said.

A source from the Calabarzon police admitted that jueteng has found its way back in Laguna, as well as in Cavite and Batangas.

The source said a special operations unit of the Calabarzon police in Camp Vicente Lim had arrested 11 persons from a suspected jueteng den in Biñan town last December.

Last month, anti-jueteng czar Edward Hagedorn confirmed that "organized jueteng" was back in Quezon province and that guerrilla-type operations were back in other areas in Luzon.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a staunch antigambling crusader, also said jueteng operations went full blast during the holidays in Bicol, particularly in Camarines Sur and Albay.

More than 1,200 lose jobs in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—RETRENCHMENTS IN SOME 29 establishments in the region last year has left 1,292 people jobless in Bicol, the Department of Labor and Employment in the region said in a statement.

On the other hand, the DOLE-Bicol said that 12,906 Bicolanos found new jobs last year, including 6,514 who were locally employed and the 2,889 who signed contracts for overseas employment.

"The number of Bicolanos placed for new jobs last year is much higher than the number of retrenched employees," said DOLE-5 Assistant Regional Director Alvin Villamor.

Retrenchment in the industry sector is the highest with a total of 902 lay-offs, with 705 workers retrenched in the construction sector and 164 workers in the mining sector.

Under the services sector, the highest number of retrenchments were in the transportation, communication, and storage services with 124 workers laid off. The wholesale, re-

tail and trade services downsized by some 115 employees.

The water, gas and electricity industry recorded the least retrenchments, posting only nine, while the manufacturing sector, which was forecast to be unstable in the early days of 2005, only had 24 retrenchments, said the DOLE-5 report.

The financing, insurance, real estate and business services also had 62 retrenchments while the community, social and personal services had 86 employees terminated.

Albay posted the highest number of retrenchments, totaling 1,098, followed by Camarines Sur with 94, and Camarines Norte with 53. There were no reported retrenchments in Sorsogon and Masbate, DOLE-5 said.

Some 37 terminated employees were also recorded by DOLE but their locality had not been established since they were walk-in clients. Leo Martin B. Ganace, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Across the **NATION**

Patent war over flower fest looms

BAGUIO CITY—MAYOR BRAULIO Yaranon on Thursday launched this year's Baguio Flower Festival or Panagbenga amid strong objections from a foundation that claims ownership over the 11-year-old tourist-drawing activity.

Yaranon said the festival he helped organize would run its course because "it is owned by the people" and any group interested in patenting Panagbenga is risking the public's ire.

He was referring to the Baguio Flower Festival Foundation Inc., which is operated by festival founder Damaso Bangaoet and Yaranon's political rivals.

The festival was developed by Bangaoet, employees of the defunct John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. and officials of the Camp John Hay Development Corp. in 1995 to help resuscitate Baguio tourism. The local industry suffered in the aftermath of

the 1990 Luzon earthquake.

The foundation ran the event before former Mayor Bernardo Vergara took over Panagbenga in 2003.

Bangaoet and Baguio Rep. Maunilio Domogan have launched the foundation's own Panagbenga schedule of activities, with the support of Cordillera tourism director Purificacion Molintas.

But Yaranon's version now boasts of the support of President Macapagal-Arroyo herself.

Ms Arroyo, according to Yaranon, will attend the festival's grand opening on Jan. 30.

The Baguio City Council discussed the possibility of patenting the name "Panagbenga" in 2005 to secure the government's rights over the activity.

But at the end of 2005, the city council resolved to return the festival's reigns to its founder instead.

Yaranon refuses to acknowl-

edge the council's decision.

During a Jan. 5 press conference, Yaranon said he backed a community-initiated festival that would be run by Baguio Bishop Carlito Cenzon and businesswoman Nelia Cid because Bangaoet abandoned the city in 2005.

Yaranon said the city government would not lift a finger should Bangaoet assert his legal claim over the festival. But he warned any claimant that the festival is now owned by the Baguio community.

Lawyer Wilbert Tan of the Fortuna law office said Yaranon's decision to oppose a foundation-run festival was devoid of politics.

Tan brushed aside reports that the foundation was poised to secure a restraining order against Yaranon's group.

Cid, who presided over last year's festival, said the Fortuna law office had been helping her clear up legal concerns that arose from

the 10th Panagbenga.

Cid and Yaranon are also facing libel cases filed by Vergara and Domogan over allegations that operators of the previous festivals enriched themselves.

The last nine festivals reportedly earned over P100 million in advertising and sales revenues.

Cenzon said he supported Yaranon after failing to negotiate a merger between the foundation and the mayor's group.

"My heart is torn... but time is running out now. My only wish was to help the Panagbenga get on its feet," Cenzon said in a handwritten letter he sent Yaranon on Dec. 29, 2005.

Cid said Bangaoet drafted a memorandum of agreement between her and the foundation, but had not returned to cement the deal. Vincent Cabresca and Donna Demetillo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



THESE are sample shots of the 10th Baguio Flower Festival. The 11th festival is starting out with controversy because of a battle over who owns it.

VINCENT CABRESCA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Dureza new presidential adviser on peace process

COTABATO CITY—A SPOKESPERSON for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) welcomed Saturday former Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza's appointment as the new Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

When he was government chief negotiator, Dureza had a spat with the MILF over the official's alleged revision of agreements without consulting the rebel group.

"We are looking forward to a much stronger coordination with

him this time," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the Inquirer.

President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Dureza on Friday to replace Teresita Deles, who resigned last year. Dureza, 58, also heads the Office of the President in Mindanao and the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

He is also adviser to the government's team that negotiates with the National Democratic Front.

Jeffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Palawan asks court to freeze Malampaya share

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—AFTER obtaining a favorable decision from the regional trial court, the provincial government is seeking to further secure its expected share through the freezing of disbursements from the Malampaya revenues.

Last Dec. 29, the province's legal office filed a "motion to render a full accounting of the actual payments" of Shell Philippines Exploration BV to the Bureau of Treasury and Department of Finance with the RTC's Branch 95.

It also sought to "freeze" or place in escrow account the 40

percent local government unit's share to serve as a protection against use of the money by the national government.

Instead, the funds would have to be set aside and made available only when the court mandates the fund's release to Palawan.

The motion is anchored on an earlier decision of the same court, which declared that Palawan is entitled to a share in the Camago-Malampaya Natural Gas proceeds.

In a 30-page decision, RTC Branch 52 Judge Bienvenido Blascaflor had ruled that the

province of Palawan is "entitled to 40-percent share of the national wealth" pursuant to provisions of the 1987 Constitution, in accordance with the Local Government Code of 1991.

Palawan's share shall be computed based on the revenues generated from the Camago-Malampaya natural gas project starting Oct. 16, 2001, said the decision.

Records from the Department of Energy showed that Palawan could still get as much as P1.5 billion as its share for the last three years.

The project is expected to generate about \$2.1 billion for Palawan, when the court issues its final ruling.

The motion asked the court to direct Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla to provide a full accounting of the total gross collection from the Camago-Malampaya natural gas project from January 2002 to December 2005, including its conversion to peso denomination, that will clearly show the 40-percent LGU share.

Jofelle R. Tesoro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

ROUNDUP

Flight prospects

DAVAO CITY—The Asian Tourism Forum (ATF) 2006, which would be held here this month, could become an opportunity for the opening of direct flights between Davao City and South Korea, according to Art Boncalo, president of the Davao Tourism Association. "With Davao as host city of the ATF, there is an opportunity the city will be included in the list of South Korean destinations," he said.



Judy Quibos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cell phone snatchers

STA. ROSA CITY—Five women pretending to be holiday revelers snatched the cell phones and other valuables of 10 visitors of the Enchanted Kingdom at Barangay Balibago here on Jan. 1. Police said the security personnel of the Enchanted Kingdom arrested the suspects after being alerted by one of the victims. The suspects, all from Manila, have been detained at the city jail here.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Missing teen

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—A fourth year student of the Guevarra National High School here has been reported missing for 12 days now. Police said Joyce Ann Francia, 16, left her home in Barangay San Juan, Sta. Cruz, Laguna at 9 p.m. on Dec. 27 and has not returned since. Ann's mother, Edna Alvarez Francia, told police that her daughter was wearing brown pants, blue jacket and white sandals when she last saw her. She is about 4'11" with brown complexion, black hair at shoulder level and slim body. Those who know the whereabouts of Joyce Ann may call Doris Matlenzo at 0917-9389863; Edna Matlenzo of Barangay San Juan, Sta. Cruz; and Laguna Provincial Police Office, Investigation Section at Barangay Bagumbayan.

Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Calamity state in 4 Leyte towns

MAASIN CITY—Four towns in Southern Leyte have been declared in a state of calamity after floods caused by incessant rains wrought havoc to crops and infrastructure, with damages totaling at least P50 million. Declared in a state of calamity were Sogod, St. Bernard, Hinundayan and Hinunangan. The worst hit was Hinunangan, with P23 million in damages to newly planted abaca and to fields placed with rice that was ready for harvest. About 800 hectares of farmlands planted to abaca and rice had been inundated, prompting Mayor Roberto Lagumbay to declare the town in a state of calamity. Mallorca said

Jani Arnaz, PDI Visayas Bureau

P100M for roads in Negros Oriental

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Department of Public Works and Highways has allotted P100 million for farm-to-market roads in 25 cities and municipalities in Negros Oriental. Rodrigo Catapusan, DPWH-2nd engineering district acting chief, said the amount is part of the P6-billion infrastructure fund allocated by the national government to Central Visayas. For the first quarter, he said each local government in the province would be entitled to a P2 million farm-to-market road project to be completed by March 15. The same amount for a similar project will also be allocated for the second quarter, he said. The P6-billion fund is taken from the P37-billion savings last year by the national government from interest payments of foreign debts.

Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Photographer dies

ANGELES CITY—News photographer Ricarte "Boy" Sagad died of complications from pneumonia on Wednesday night. He was 61. A veteran of the police beat in Angeles City and the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga, Sagad was a photographer of The Voice, the oldest news weekly in Central Luzon. He will be buried after an 8 a.m. Mass on Jan. 10 at the old Mababacat public cemetery.

Tonette Orjas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

P. Laudencia; 84

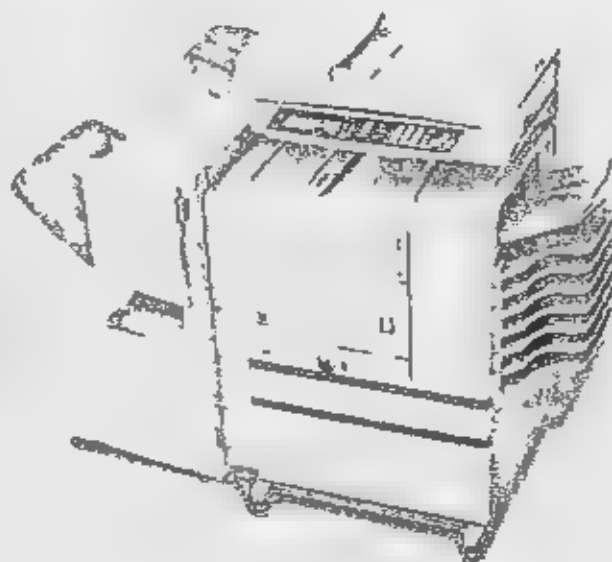
PEDRON N. Laudencia, 84, an agricultural engineer, died at Berkeley, California, USA on Dec. 29, 2005, after a heart attack. He was recognized as the most outstanding agricultural engineer of the Philippines in 1980 and most outstanding alumnus of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños in 1981. He is survived by children Louis, Marilyn, Debbie, Julia, Clint and Des, daughters-in-law Luzviminda Mendoza Lozada, Merle Grisologo and Larmi Rebutelos, sons-in-law Motonobu Tsuchiya, Alfredo Chinguanco and Luman Bringas, and grandchildren Louisa Mae, Levi Micalah, Rio, Leo, Piero, Erika, Meriel, Patricia, Patrick and Michael Joshua. Memorial services will be held from Jan. 11 to 14 at the Church of the Holy Redeemer-UCCP at Alley 4 corner Road 2, Project 6, Quezon City. Interment will be at the family plot at Himmilayan Pilipino, Quezon City. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the L&L Foundation Inc. For details, call 928-2117; 09198930225.

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Davao City prepares for Asean tourism forum

DAVAO CITY—GREEN LAMP-posts with replicas of wailing-wailing forged out of steel, the city's icon, are suddenly sprouting in the middle of the streets here as preparations for the upcoming Association of Southeast Asian (Asean) Tourism Forum (ATF) reaches its frenzy this week.

Despite the rains that persisted since the start of the year, the local government is bent on turning the city into the country's brightest in time for the big event, according to Councilor Susabel Reta, chair of the ATF beautification committee.

As with the citywide beautifi-

cation, the administration of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte is also putting in place tight security measures, refusing to take chances against possible threats.

Duterte has tasked the police and the military to secure the whole city, even weeks before the event, which commences on Jan. 13th.

But beyond the Filipino's traditional show of hospitality, and making the guests feel safe and comfortable, Duterte said he turned down the suggestion by Singaporean delegates for a firecracker display in the city.

"A firecracker ban is still in effect here and bending the law might encourage violators," he said. Duterte has asked foreign visitors to make arrangements with neighboring cities like Samal or Tagum, Davao del Norte where fireworks are allowed.

He warned that mere possession of firecrackers here is unlawful.

"If they want, they can do fireworks display in the midst of the Davao Gulf, beyond the city's jurisdiction," he said.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said the ATF will put Davao back on the map of the world's top

tourist destinations.

The city's image as one of the most loveable places in Asia has been tarnished by the 2003 bombings that killed more than 40 persons and wounded scores of others.

Barely a week from now, flags from the 10-member Asean will fly along the city's main thoroughfare as the city hosts the biggest gathering of government ministers and tourism industry players in the Asean.

Top government officials and key tourism players will be in Davao for the 25th ATF, a regional

cooperation within the Asean to promote Southeast Asia as one tourist destination to the global travel market. The Asean is composed of Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia and Brunei.

Myanmar was slated to host the event this year but backed out at the last moment.

The Philippines was supposed to host the ATF in 2007 yet.

The nine-day event will involve a series of Asean ministerial conferences, travel fair and business meetings in the city's various

first class resorts.

One of ATF's main features is the Travel Exchange (Travel) that will take place at the NCCC Mail exhibition center, where buyers of wholesale tourism packages from all over the world will have a chance to meet top tourism players in the region.

"Close to 500 buyers have signed up for the event, with the Europeans outnumbering other visitors from other parts of the world," Art Boncato, president of the Davao Tourism Association, said. Germelina A. Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau

No deaths in Lanao Sur clan war, Southcom exec says

COTABATO CITY—NO ONE WAS HURT IN Thursday's clashes between two feuding families in Lanao del Sur, according to Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, deputy commander of the military's Southern Command.

Dolorfino said on Friday that one of the warring clans have reported that 10 of their men were killed so they could get sympathy from the government.

"The report is not true. There was no casualty on both sides," Dolorfino said.

He said the source of the report about fatalities was a tribal leader, who picked up the rumor spread by one of the warring parties.

"I talked to our ground commander in Lanao and he told me the Kibad and Balt families were trying to exaggerate the report to get government attention," Dolorfino said.

He said as of Saturday afternoon, the claimed casualty figure decreased to two.

"But this morning, we received feedback that there was really no fatality," he said.

On Thursday, violence erupted in Tuburan town when members of the Kibad and Balt

families clashed with the Masigay and Dimaporo clans.

In recent months, more than 20 people from both sides have died because of the feud.

"We will dispatch emissaries anytime to pacify both sides," Dolorfino said.

He said the military describes the latest confrontation as an "acoustic war" because although the two sides have been fighting, there were no casualties.

Chief Supt. Akmal Mamalinta, chief of the Autonomous Region police, said ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has tasked Vice Gov. Ansaruddin Adiong to work out a peaceful settlement of the raging clan war in Tuburan.

"Dozens of policemen from the PNP-ARMM regional office were deployed to Tuburan Friday to help local leaders pacify warring families," Mamalinta said.

Governor Ampatuan said religious leaders have also been tapped to help resolve the conflict. Jeffrey Maitem and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested Labor Services Contractor, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the in-warehouse handling of the 2006 NFA imported rice and/or paddy at the following areas:

Warehouse/Province	Estimated Volume (in bags of 50 kg.)	Approved Rate per bag of 50 kg.	Approved Budget (in Pesos)
1. Tawoy GID Whse, Ipi ZS	232,000	2.00	464,000.00
2. Guayma Whse, Malabang ZS	148,000	2.00	296,000.00
3. Tiguma GID Whse, Pag ZDS	410,000	1.75	717,500.00
4. Culo GID Whse, Molave, ZDS	90,000	1.75	157,500.00
5. Guayon GID, Whse, ZDN	60,000	2.00	120,000.00
6. FSC Whse, S. Osmela, ZDN	34,000	2.00	68,000.00
7. Lutuban Whse, Soccon ZDN	36,000	2.00	72,000.00
TOTAL	1,402,000		

All labor contractors interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of a Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of P10,000.00 to the NFA in Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated below.

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-declaratory "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Schedule of bidding activities:

Activities	Date and Time
• Last Day of Application for Registration/Interest of bidders who are not NFA accredited cargo handling operators or with expired registration	January 16, 2006 / 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & issuance of Bid forms	January 12-13; 15-18, 2006
• Pre-Bid Conference	January 19, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.
• Opening of Bids	February 3, 2006 / 2:00 P.M.
• Bid Evaluation	February 6-7, 2006
• Post-qualification	February 8-13, 2006
• Notice of Award	February 14, 2006

* Venue will be at the NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zambo. City

The National Food Authority assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd) ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA
Chairman, NFA-IX BAC

(PDI - January 9 and 16, 2006)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on July 28, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/merchants/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED CONTRACT	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial	Purchases of Drugs & Medical Supplies	P 12,554,882.95	180 CD
2. MEDICAL/SURGICAL			P 1,203,249.00	180 CD
3. DENTAL	Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Laboratory Supplies and Reagents, Dental, X-Ray and Other for UMC and District Hospitals	P 160,654.50	180 CD
4. X-RAY			P 1,203,249.00	180 CD

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-declaratory "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 8, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	January 11, 2006 9:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	January 30, 2006 9:00 AM, Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol, SFC
4. Bid Evaluation	January 31, 2006 9:00 AM
5. Post-qualification	February 01, 2006 9:00 AM
6. Notice of Award	February 01, 2006 1:00 PM
	February 01, 2006 1:00 PM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable deposit of P2,000.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd) JOR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN

Contact Person:

(Sgd) MS. CATHERINE E. FRANCO
BACTWG Chemistry/Assistant Provincial Budget Officer
Tel. No. (072) 700-5308

(PDI - Jan 2 & 9, 2006)

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Most dormitories 'virtual death traps'

By Cyril L. Bonabenta
PDI Research

"VIRTUAL DEATH TRAPS"

That was how Alvin Estrada, spokesperson of the United Fire Fighters of the Philippines, described in 2001 some buildings in Metro Manila.

Estrada had said that most dormitories in the University Belt and at the University of the Philippines Diliman were violating the Fire Code.

"By their looks alone, these are apparently fire traps," Estrada said at the time.

His remarks fit in with an observation by Manila architect Luis Santos that majority of the dormitories in the city did not comply with the National Building Code.

The information was disclosed in a 1996 public hearing conducted by the Senate committee on urban planning, housing and resettlement chaired by then Sen Gregorio Honasan.

In the same hearing, an official of the Manila City administrator's office admitted that, of the 282 boardinghouses and dormitories recommended for closure by a committee created by then Mayor Alfredo Lim, only 25 had been formally closed.

Among the violations found by the committee was lack of fire exits and ventilation.

Most residents of the dormitories were students from the provinces who chose to study in Manila.

The following were some of the reported fire incidents in dormitories and boardinghouses in Metro Manila.

January 2001—A man pours kerosene and lights the curtains of a dormitory at Tahananang Mapagpala, an orphanage in Caloocan, causing an early-morning stampede.

July 27, 2001—An 11-hour blaze in Tondo, Manila, kills a 6-year-old girl and her 5-year-old brother and destroys 300 houses—mostly illegal residences along the Philippine National Railway tracks—leaving 600 families homeless. Authorities estimate the damage to property at P100 million. The fire reportedly started inside a boardinghouse.

Jan. 1, 2002—Fires break out in two boardinghouses in Manila—the Borja Roxas Building in Dapitan and Chica Boarding House in Quapo. No one is injured.

Dec. 21, 2005—Fire guts a two-story boardinghouse in Barangay San Isidro, Parañaque City.



A POLICEMAN walks past the charred remains of a student dormitory on P. Campa Street in Manila.

REUTERS

Fire guts boardinghouse at University Belt

From page A1

About 12 families lived in the building at 833 P. Campa St., aside from other tenants who occupied 17 rooms on the second floor according to barangay chair Maou Chan.

Besides Lachica, the fatalities were identified by fire officials as Mark Lester Relente, 22, Joey Dangaran, 25, and Jelmar Capati, 19.

The four other victims, three males and a female, were still unidentified as of press time.

Preliminary reports suggested the fire started in the kitchen on the ground floor.

The old building, totally gutted, was made of light and concrete materials, investigators said.

Escape through windows

Guillermo said seven of the victims were apparently drinking beer before the fire broke out at 3:36 a.m.

He said the owner of a nearby store told investigators some of the victims had bought beer from

her hours before the fire occurred.

Three of the victims—Relente, Dangaran and Capati—worked as helpers at the Best Choice water refilling station near the boardinghouse.

The other boarders initially panicked but were able to clamber out of the windows.

Blocked exits

Firemen reported seeing suitcases and other belongings blocking exits of the building, making it difficult for people to escape.

TV footage showed two women weeping on the street as they awaited word on the fate of friends and relatives in the burning building.

Raised voices and stampeding feet roused Leda Andion, a 30-year-old nurse and one of the boarders, from her sleep.

Thinking her housemates had caught a burglar, she and Ryan Pilapil, a longtime friend, rushed downstairs.

Thick billowing smoke and

screams of "Fire!" greeted them.

Shouts in the darkness

Within seconds, electric power was cut and a smoky darkness enveloped the second floor of the boardinghouse, drifting toward the rooms.

Pilapil led a small group of boarders toward a room facing the street, shouting directions in the dark. Through the smoke, Andion saw others lining up to jump through the window grill opening.

But they could not move fast enough because some of the boarders were lugging huge bags with them, Andion recalled.

"I was trying to get some air, but there was only smoke," she said, recalling her struggle to breathe.

Lucky to be alive

Andion was about to lose consciousness when Pilapil put his arm around her neck, while holding another woman with his other

arm.

Then they jumped out the window.

The three tumbled down the metal planks, and dropped hard onto a blue Toyota van parked just across the boardinghouse.

"I almost did not feel the impact. The instant we jumped, all my concentration was on the air rushing back into my lungs," Andion said. "I'm lucky to be alive."

Andion, who is studying for the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools, said she felt she was at death's door just before the jump.

Saving important papers

Were it not for Pilapil, 23, she would not have lasted inside the building, she said.

The eight people who died could have had more warning and time to save themselves if some had not carried so much luggage with them, she lamented.

Andion herself was only able to recover a small bag containing important papers.

One of the boarders who could not do without her baggage was Mae Baligasa, 22, an information technology student at University of the East.

During the commotion, a man got angry at her for "putting my luggage first before other people's lives," she said.

But Baligasa defended her action, saying she had always kept that bag containing important papers ready in case of an emergency.

Chatting on the phone

"Nobody expected it would end this way," she said.

Baligasa was chatting on the phone with a man she had met online when the fire struck.

"I don't usually have such long conversations on the phone. It's a blessing in disguise. I would probably have been sleeping and not noticed anything," she said.

When she heard the commotion outside, she opened the door and immediately smelled smoke. Suddenly, the lights went out

and she had to find her way in the dark to the window exit, she said.

Fear of death

"I thought I was going to suffocate to death," she said.

Finally, she found the exit, pushed her bag out the window, and jumped.

Edward Tia, 43, a mechanical engineer applying for a job in Saudi Arabia, said the boardinghouse was owned by a certain Constantino Manahan.

Until yesterday, it was home to students, seafarers, employees and families, he said.

He could not say how many occupants there were, but said there were probably fewer than 50.

It was fortunate, however, that many of the boarders were on vacation, otherwise, more people could have died, Tia added.

The remains of the fatalities were brought to Universal Funeral Service in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Manila was hit by more than 400 fires last year.

Young consumers prefer e-load to eating

From page A1

home to Bicol for a vacation, followed her and swamped her mobile phone inbox.

Not luxury but necessity

"If you ask me, the cell phone load has become a necessity for us Filipinos. It is no longer a luxury," said Nario. "And sales are getting even stronger."

Nario, who started selling cell phone loads in June 2005, said she had been using sales from it to keep her sari-sari store afloat.

Indeed, the tectonic plates of consumer spending have shifted to telecommunications over the past couple of years.

Consumer spending for telecommunications and transport (which are lumped together in the statistics) has been steadily increasing since 2003, the same year the electronic cell phone load was introduced.

Better than buying food

In absolute amounts, Filipinos spent P165.8 billion for telecommunications and transport services in the first half of 2005 from P118.03 billion the previous year and P98 billion in the same period in 2003.

The growth in spending for telecommunications and transport has been outstripping other major expenditure groups, such as utilities (17.8 percent), food (12.6 percent) and beverage (5 percent).

Rafael Buenaventura, former Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas governor, had noticed as early as 2003 that more and more people were buying cell phone loads than food or cigarettes. He thought that a change in computing inflation was in order.

Soon after, the economic planning agency had to reconstitute the consumer price index by increasing the weight of telecom-

munications and transport to reflect their higher share in the allocation of the consumer wallet.

Globe Telecom Inc.'s qualitative research showed that "consumers tend to scrimp more on other basic necessities like food and transportation and gum-micks" rather than on cell phone load.

Lerma Nacu, a Smart retailer, has seen how the spending pattern has changed in recent years.

Along with her electronic load business, Nacu has a halo-halo (a concoction of fruit, milk and crushed ice) and ice candy stall. Of the three, her cell phone load business is the one that sells briskly in any weather, no matter what's happening in politics or the economy.

No season for texting

"The halo halo has a season but the load chooses no day or month," said Nacu. "It's always in demand, even if life is getting worse."

Sales of phone loads, she said, had been unaffected by rising prices and the supposedly weak spending capacity of Filipinos.

Her store on San Jose Street in Mandaluyong City is frequented by college students from a nearby campus. They would rather starve a little and sacrifice their much-loved soda in favor of a phone load, she said.

Cell phone-crazy Pinoys

By her own account, Nacu sells an average of P350 worth of load a day. A retailer who sells P3,500 worth a month gets a P300 free top up, which he can sell, or use for himself.

In a country where more than half of the population is considered poor, the cell phone-crazed citizens surely have messed up their priorities. Or maybe not.

The Philippines, is after all, the world's texting capital, where more than 400 million messages are sent a day by more than 30 million mobile phone users.

Absolute numbers are much greater in countries like China, where some 350 million mobile phone subscribers send about a billion text messages a day. But the ratio of text to every subscriber is more than 10 in the Philippines, against an average of three in China.

Keeping in touch

Globe Telecom president Gerar de Ables said keeping in touch had become a necessity for Filipinos.

Indeed, a Pinoy who has not received a text message for a few hours tends to feel alone and incomplete.

After all, all it takes is a P1 text message to cheer up a man, or break his heart.

"Where merienda (snack) and 'gummic' have become a little bit of a luxury, communication has become a basic need in this country," said the head of Globe, the company that pioneered text messaging in the Philippines.

Trickle-down effect

Fortunately, it is not just Globe and its rival, Smart, which are raking in money. Profits are trickling down to their more than a million dealers and retailers all over the country.

Eric Yu, president of Cellprime, one of Globe's major dealers, said that while sales of phone cards appeared to have been insulated from the general economic malaise, growth had been capped.

Where last year's sales continued to rise by double digits, growth this year had been anemic at 1 to 2 percent.

No end in sight

"The cell phone business didn't

How to start an e-load business

From page A1

3 Business earnings range from 13 percent to 15 percent for every auto load. With Smart, one can receive reward points by activating his or her Smart Money Card for a fee of P200. Points earned from Smart Money Card can be converted into a personal load or payment when one reloads. **Jamie Alarcon and Chona Galang, PDI Research**

get hit negatively unlike the others but growth had flattened," said Yu. "Because of the slowdown, we are forced to put expansion on plans on hold."

Still, he said, those in the cell phone business were certainly doing much better than most.

Rogelio Quevedo, former Smart chief legal officer and now head of the wholesale business of PLDT, said mobile phone companies weren't just competing against each other anymore.

"Nowadays we compete with soda and shampoo makers and cinema owners," he said.

It helps that prices of telecom services have been dropping while everything else from fuel to cooking oil has gone up.

Thus, the mobile phone craze that began in the late '90s is nowhere near dissipation. Tomorrow: The jolly jeep phenomenon.

Estrada camp turns cold to alliance plan

From page A1

Presidents Fidel V. Ramos and Corason C. Aquino against the scandal-racked Arroyo administration.

"We're not so hot on it," said Estrada's son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada. "We're not so eager about it. If such an alliance comes about, that's fine by us. If not, then let it be."

The young Estrada believed that sharing a "common agenda," like setting up a transitory form of government if President Macapaga-Arroyo stepped down, could bring the three former Presidents together and jump-start the talks.

"If they have a common agenda to uplift the lives of the people and solve the crisis, they can work together," he said. When pressed what could be the common agenda, he said "Maybe a transitory form of government and who should lead it."

The senator, however, pointed out that any unity plan among the former leaders should benefit not only one personally. "If it's for the good of the country, why not? If it's for the good of just one individual, forget it," he said.

No takers

The elder Estrada declared on Thursday that he was willing to set aside whatever political differences he had with Ramos and Aquino, and forge a united front with them "for the good of our country."

The next day, his spokesperson Dadian Dila again harped on this in radio interviews, but there were no takers. Ramos has said such a collaboration would not happen, while Aquino has opted to be mum on this.

Estrada's former agrarian sec-

retary, Horacio Morales, floated the idea on Wednesday, saying the United Opposition would form an alliance of the three former leaders to compete Ms. Arroyo to step down.

The three could serve as senior advisers to a "transitory governing council" that could be set up after Ms. Arroyo stepped down, he said.

The proposal, among other issues, was discussed when Ramos met with Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III on Jan. 2 at his office in Makati City, according to Sotto.

'Alliance doomed'

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the alliance was doomed because of Ramos.

"How can you have a good alliance if one of the parties is untrustworthy, like Ramos? How can Cory and Erap trust Ramos?" Pimentel said in an interview. "He's a mole of Gloria, living up to his days as an intelligence officer."

Senator Estrada, however, disagreed. "His support for Gloria is waning. Sooner or later, he [Ramos] will make a clean break," he said, citing his sources.

Ramos issued a statement on Friday through his media adviser, Ed Malay, but kept people guessing as to whether he still supported the Arroyo administration.

Many saw Ramos would attend the Jan. 14 Lakas national directorate meeting and the Jan. 24 Council of State meeting, but stressed that this should not be interpreted any other way because the former President remained the founder and chairperson of the party.

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(In exact order)

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Condo units for QC informal settlers

By Dj Yap

THE LIVES OF 58 FAMILIES WHO used to be informal settlers have taken a turn for the better with the awarding of cheap condominium units by the Quezon City government.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano

Belmonte Jr. recently formally turned over the keys to the low-cost medium-rise building to the first batch of beneficiaries of the city's housing program in Barangay Escopa III, Project 4.

The families can now occupy their own units at Hura Homes I on P Burgos Street through the city's

Housing and Urban Renewal Authority, a city-owned corporation.

The condominium-type building is just a block away from Aurora Boulevard and the Light Rail Transit and Metro Rail Transit systems.

Designed to accommodate 80 families, the condominium will al-

so become the new home of 22 other informal settler families, once they have completed the documentation and payment requirements of the program.

Each unit has a floor area of 15 sq m, with a strong water supply, electrical connection, a concrete roof deck, a garbage chute, and an

emergency fire alarm system.

The condo units have a selling price ranging from P161,969 to P225,000 each. Those who availed of the housing program opted to pay for their units either in cash or in easy installments within a 10 to 15-year period.

Hura Homes I was developed

exclusively for the city's informal settlers and low-income government employees. Once completed the project will feature four medium-rise buildings that can accommodate 320 families.

Hura is also developing a low-cost housing program in Barangay Vasra for City Hall employees.



MEMBERS of a marching band practice for today's Feast Day of the Black Nazarene in front of the Quiapo Church. Nearby streets will be closed to traffic starting at 10 a.m. to make way for the procession. **BERNARD ARAZA**

Traffic rerouted for procession

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MOTORISTS PASSING THROUGH Manila's streets are advised to follow a traffic rerouting scheme to maintain the normal flow of vehicles during today's feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo.

Manila Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong has ordered the Traffic Enforcement Group to conduct traffic flow maintenance to prevent traffic grid locks when thousands of devotees start flocking to the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene.

"All police units in Quiapo district are instructed to conduct clearing operations along the streets that will be used for the procession to prevent obstruction of the flow of the parade," Bulaong said in a statement.

Police officials also promised to deploy 250 policemen in the

area, more than a hundred of whom would be undercover agents, to ensure peace and order.

There will also be police assistance centers in at least four vital spots in the area.

The southbound lane of Quezon Boulevard fronting Quiapo Church will be closed to motorists starting at 10 a.m. today.

The following streets in Quiapo District will also be closed: Andalucia, Pugoso, Palanca, Estero Cegado, Isetann Service Road, Recto, Nepomuceno and Bilbid Viejo, Casal, Arlegui (the stretch from Casal or Legarda to Barbosa), Hidalgo and San Sebastian.

Those going to Quiapo from España are advised to take Nicanor Reyes Street (formerly Moraya), turn left to Recto leading to Legarda going to P. Casal.

Those coming from Di-

masalang and Blumentritt going to Quezon Boulevard and Quiapo can use the underpass in going straight to Recto and right to Orogueza Street.

Those going to MacArthur Bridge can take North Jones Flyover, turn right to PhilPost or take Plaza Lacson straight to Plaza Sta. Cruz and left to R. Torres leading to Recto.

Passenger jeeps plying the Divisoria via Quiapo route are advised to use the Recto U-turn slot upon reaching the closed Isetann Road leading to Nicanor Reyes Street.

Motorists from S.H. Loyola Street to Quiapo can turn left to Recto and left to Legarda.

From Legarda, those going to P. Casal and Palanca Streets can take Ayala Bridge in going to Taft Avenue leading to P. Burgos and Quezon Bridge. **With Edson C. Tandoc Jr.**

METRO OPINION

Cattle

I REMEMBER THIS TV DOCUMENTARY about life on a cattle ranch in the USA. There was a segment showing cows to be branded and branded behind yellow metal rails.

The rails snaked along in the shape of a continuous letter S. It terminated at a device that held a cow fast so a ranch hand could brand it.

This image of obedient cattle in a long, snaking line invariably comes to mind whenever I see those pink metal fences at the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) North Avenue Station's bus stop.

I've ridden the MRT almost every week since the line opened. I remember when the fences, I almost always got down at North Avenue to take a Monumento bus for home.

I now alight at the GMA-Kamuning station whose bus stop is located just a few meters from its exit. This is a life saving decision on my part.

The "geniuses" who designed the North Avenue cattle pens force tired riders to take a five-minute walk along heavily polluted Edsa to get to the bus stop.

For those who have to go to SM, there is the added ordeal of climbing the stairs of an unroofed MMDA pedestrian over-

pass that offers no protection from the rain and sun.

This commuter's Calvary, I read, is meant to ease traffic flow and protect pedestrians. I've got no beef about the aim.

But these MMDA "geniuses" should have first walked the walk, literally, to find out first hand how painful it is for tired women, children, senior citizens and men to trod a further five minutes just so they can take a crowded bus home.

Couldn't these "geniuses" have built the bus stop closer to the station? Land is available.

Today, however the doomed inhale all that glorious car exhaust fumes as they plod along the cattle pens toward the North Avenue bus stop.

Here, the doomed resemble cattle as they patiently wait for their rides behind snaking metal rails.

Cattle. That's what we are to bureaucrats.

Traffic management and pedestrian engineering take precedence over our health, survival and well-being.

And by being forced to inhale more of Edsa's deadly toxins than we should, we are truly cattle being led to the slaughter.

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METRO BRIEFS

2 laborers killed

Two laborers were stabbed dead by three men on Saturday in Quezon City. Noyon Francisco, 40, and Jerome Alberto, 34, with friend John Canzon, were waiting for a tricycle at 11:55 p.m. on Magsaysay Street in Doña Faustina Subdivision, Barangay San Bartolome when Alfonso Salvador, a welder, with two unidentified male companions, started a fight with them for still unknown reasons, according to a police report. They exchanged blows until the suspects pulled out a knife and stabbed the victims. Francisco died on the spot while Alberto died on the way to the hospital. Canzon was unhurt. The three suspects, however, escaped.

Dj Yap

Cleaner Parañaque

Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe has urged owners of industrial and commercial establishments and their workforce to comply with the provisions of Ordinance 04-18, the city's sanitation code, to make Parañaque a healthy and clean place to live in. The ordinance, which takes effect this year, requires all commercial and industrial centers to secure sanitary permits from the local government. It also calls for employees of food establishments, water facilities, public and private markets to secure health certificates. On the other hand, workers in dancing halls, night clubs, massage clinics, sauna baths and music lounges should undergo a health test before they can be issued working or occupational health certificates.

Jacelyn R. Uy

Mass for Palma

All graduates of St. Scholastica's College are invited to attend the Holy Mass for the late Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma today, Jan. 9, at 10 a.m., at the Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City. Palma is a beloved alumna (HS '31) and the very first PAX awardee of St. Scholastica's College, Manila. St. Scholastica's Priory, its academic community and the St. Scholastica's Alumnas Foundation are one with the family of Caring in their deep sorrow.



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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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Fiery Cortez rescues Aces in double OT

By June Navarro

STA. LUCIA REALTY SHOULD FIND A quick antidote to Mike Cortez.

Cortez tormented the Realtors with his signature pick-and-roll play and led Alaska to an energy-sapping 108-104 double overtime victory at the start of the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference playoffs last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

With Odell Bradley on the bench, Cortez took over by firing a career-high 27 points, mostly

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:40 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Air 21
7:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Alaska

coming off screens and drives in the extra periods to help the Aces take the opener of the best-of-three wildcard series.

"He (Cortez) was awesome," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "We kept giving him the pick-and-roll and he made spectacular things out of it."

Cortez actually saved his team from the jaws of defeat

twice during regulation and in the first overtime before driving the final nail on the Realtors' coffin in the second extended session with a drive in the lane for a 102-101 Alaska lead.

Dennis Espino rammed his shoulder against Brandon Cablay and was assessed an offensive foul with 20 ticks left, crushing the Realtors' hopes for good.

"They (Realtors) can't solve the Mike Cortez puzzle so we just kept on going to him," said Cone. "But I'm pretty sure Game 2 on Wednesday will be much tougher."

Struggling psychologically, Bradley was benched for most of the second half after Sta. Lucia's Nelbert Omolon and Chester Toloman got into his nerves.

Meanwhile, Air 21 survived the ejection of coach Bo Perasol and pulled off a 97-88 victory over a weary San Miguel Beer squad in the second game.

Ronald Tubid completed a four-point play off an Olsen Raccia foul and Raniel De Ocampo canned another three-pointer in the final two minutes as the Express cut loose and took a 1-0 lead in their best-of-three wildcard series.

The Beermen were playing their third game in as many days.

The scores:

First Game
ALASKA 108—Cortez 27, Aliado 16, Bradley 13, Cablay 13, Carlos 12, Thomas 8, Alvarez 7, Huganatan 6, Dela Cruz 6.
STA. LUCIA 104—Espino 26, Owens 24, Duran 21, Cabagnat 17, Omolon 9, Toloman 6, Aquino 1, Call 0, Calmag 0.

Quarters: 22-18, 42-43, 65-70, 87-87.

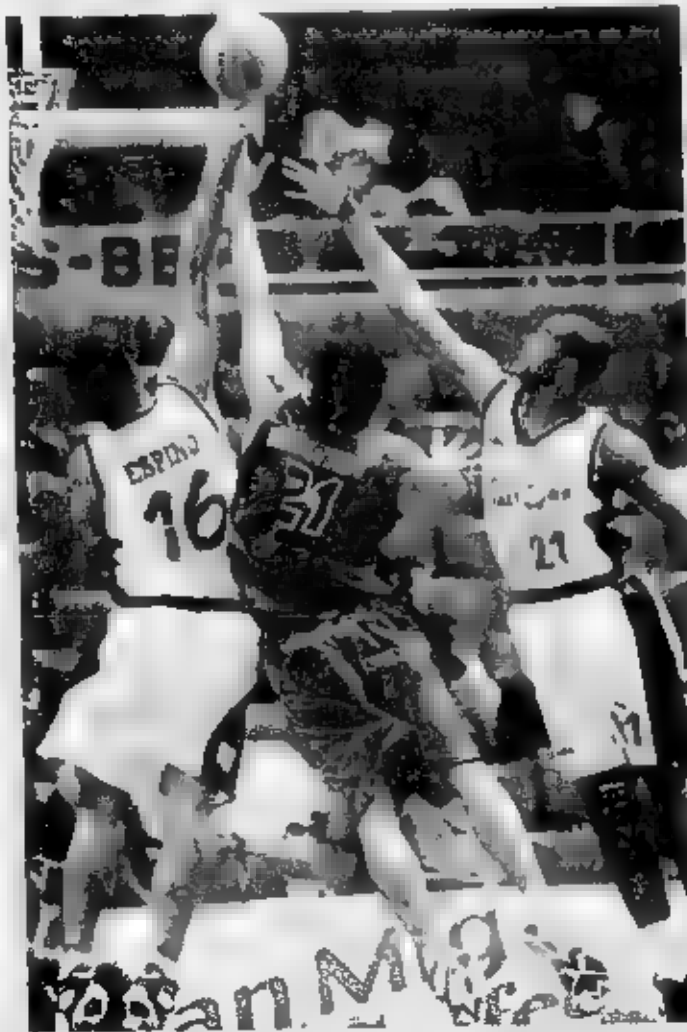
94-94, 108-104

Second Game

AIR 21 97—Ribeiro 20, Daniels 16, R. De Ocampo 16, Tubid 14, Y. De Ocampo 14, David 8, Arboleda 6, Fan 3, Canaleta 0, Fernols 0.

SAN MIGUEL 88—Sejtle 21, Montiveros 15, Johnson 11, Belasco 10, Peña 9, Melonzo 8, Lopez 5, Raccia 5, Calaguio 4.

Quarters: 29-24, 51-52, 73-73, 97-88



ALASKA'S Reynel Huganatan (center) drives off Dennis Espino (left) and Damian Owens in last night's game.

Painters prevail, stay in hunt for semis slot

By Jasmine W. Payo

RAIN OR SHINE BANKED ON A SOLID FIRST-half performance to score an 83-75 decision over Far Eastern Insurance yesterday and boost its bid for an outright semifinal berth in the PBL Heroes Cup at the San Andres Gym.

The Elasto Painters got off to a good start with veteran Jojo Tangkay drilling in seven of his 11 points in the pivotal second period. Gilbert Malabanan finished with a game-high 19 points, while big man Jay-R Reyes chipped in 14.

"We had a good run in the second quarter because of our defense," said coach Caloy Garcia after his Elasto Painters improved to a 6-3 record, just a game behind Magnolia Ice Cream's league-leading 7-2 card.

"Everybody stepped up and that was good because we also need to win our next game."

In the second game, hefty center Ken Bono delivered 18 points on an 8-of-11 shooting to lead Montaña Pawnshop past Granny Goose, 62-53.

While Montaña joined Hapee-PCU in third spot with 5-4 records, Granny Goose slipped to 5-5, in a tie with Harbour Centre. All four teams remain in contention for the outright semifinal slots.

Far Eastern Insurance, which absorbed its sev-

STANDINGS

	W	L
Magnolia	7	2
R. or Shine	6	3
Hapee-PCU	5	4
Montaña	5	4
Granny G.	5	5
Harbour	5	5
Far E. Ins.	3	7
Toyota Otis	2	8

GAMES THURSDAY

(San Andres Gym)

2 p.m.—PCU-Hapee vs Montaña Pawnshop
4 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia Ice Cream

Quarters: 22-18, 47-34, 64-56, 83-75

MONTAÑA 62

Bono 18, Compton 15, Jentilla 13, Magpayo 8, Capuz 5, Guerrero 3, Bagalun 2, Dela Cuesta 0, Mercado 0, Tolentino 0, Vergara 0, Castro 0.

GRANNY GOOSE 53

Quinahan 14, Cruz 11, Latorio 8, Gavino 6, David 4, Concha 4, Dorado 3, Griplido 2, Almada 2, Santos 1, Rueliz 0, Alad 0, Saladaga 0, Farrer 0, Pridoras 0.

Quarters: 21-7, 34-18, 48-39, 62-53

enth loss in 10 games, lost its bid for a quarterfinal stint along with the cellar-dwelling Toyota Otis Knights.

RAIN OR SHINE 83

Makabaran 19, Reyes 14, Caballos 13, Tangkay 11, Tan 7, Sta. Maria 5, Orquerra 4, Sagad 4, Javier 3, Alastor 2, Rockies 1, Enrique 0, Orbeta 0.

FAR EASTERN INS.

75—Coronel 15, Villamin 13, Latoriano 8, Eponduksen 7, Marquez 7, Gamba 6, Bono 2, Bonius 2, Gaturniano 0.



ARROYO

GMA to grace PSA Night after all

NO LESS THAN THE COUNTRY'S NO. 1 SPORTS supporter will cheer and honor the top achievers of 2005 during the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Annual Awards Night on Jan. 14 at the Manila Pavilion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo graciously accepted, at the last minute, the invitation to be the special guest in the two-hour rites honoring the best and the brightest in sports last year.

She told sports editors last month that she might not be able to attend the affair due to

pressing affairs of the state.

Together with the guest of honor, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, and Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez, Ms Arroyo will hand the Athlete of the Year trophy to Team Philippines, which won the Southeast Asian Games overall crown for the first time last year.

"The presence of no less than President Arroyo makes the affair a truly special night for our athletes," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor.

Pistons off-key versus Jazz A22

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Pacman vs El Terrible: Lessons from victory and defeat

MANNY PACQUIAO, YOU BET, IS STILL AHEAD as far as pre-fight odds go, both here at home and in well-lit Las Vegas.

But after a reality check, Erik Morales appears to enjoy an overall edge in the runup to their monumental rematch on Jan. 21.

It's like this. Pacquiao may not be in Quapo for today's fiesta procession of the *Mahal na Poong Nazareno*, but many in the great, boiling sea of devotees will bid the miraculous Black Nazarene to grant special blessings to their boxing idol in his bout against his sharp Mexican foe.

Whom will the Black Nazarene bless?

Pacquiao fans may have not realized it, but the Black Nazarene could also be counted as a Morales compatriot.

The holy image, carved out of dark wood, was transported to Manila straight from Mexico over two centuries ago.

It's also not openly known here, but Pacquiao, a devout Catholic, draws strength and power from the Nazarene in Quapo.

In January 2005, on the eve of the Black Nazarene fiesta, trainer Buboy Fernandez

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

was overheard by this reporter hollering over the phone from the Hollywood room of Pacquiao to a friend in Manila that a towel be touched onto the miraculous wooden image on behalf of the Pinoy boxing icon.

That towel, based on Buboy's frantic instructions over the phone, could be the one used to wipe out the blood from Pacquiao's gaping cut in his failed bid against Morales in their March 19 showdown in Las Vegas.

With Pacquiao very close to quitting in the 8th round, it's not farfetched to say prayers had also helped him survive the 12-round agony against Morales.

Now, how come Pacquiao has remained the odds-on pick among the majority of gamblers in

his rematch with Morales, despite having lost the first fight? That's not quite normal in the fight game, where the so-called wise money is regularly placed on the winner.

A check with Pacquiao devotees bore out a few factors that swayed bettors over to his side:

- 1) Unlike last time, Pacquiao will be using thinner punching gloves.
- 2) Pacquiao won his last fight by knockout, whereas Morales was dull and slow in losing by points in the same card.
- 3) Pacquiao has definitely learned his lessons from his last encounter with Morales and should be able to make the necessary adjustments.

Now, here are more tangible points that should give Morales the overall pre-fight edge:

- 1) Morales has trained longer than Pacman.
- 2) Morales has sparred almost twice as long as Pacquiao, doing this around 7 p.m., exactly the same time of the actual fight.
- 3) Morales is coming in from a loss and will predictably come in superbly prepared.

So, will Pacquiao—insisting to spar in the afternoon, instead of simulating the evening

fight schedule—prove a disadvantage?

That's hard to answer. His body clock, so says Lino Mondejar, a trusted team member, has been used to the afternoon sparring.

Of course, there are several other sentimental points that have led adoring countrymen to believe Pacquiao should make it this time. Maybe by knockout in the seventh or eighth round, as many fans out in the streets love to put it.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao's chief handler, American Freddie Roach, swore they have made timely adjustments to fight a better fight the second time around. They call this inevitable advantage "learning from mistakes."

But, again, will this play be any better than what Morales has vowed to employ.

You see, the opponent Pacquiao has prepared for now may no longer be the same Morales that had bloodied and beaten him the first time out.

Fighters do learn from the last fight and what could stop Morales from boxing Pacquiao a different way the second time around?

The Mexicans have a name for this: Learning from victory.

Piston

Duncan says:

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—Andre Kirilenko had 24 points and 11 rebounds, and former Pistons player Mehmet Okur added 13 points and 17 rebounds as the Utah Jazz beat NBA-leading Detroit for the second time this season, 94-90, in overtime Saturday night.

The win gave Utah a season-series sweep of Detroit and almost as many

Tansecro top Angler

THE PHILIPPINE Game Fishing Foundation recently named Lito Tansecro as the 2005 Angler of the Year. Tony Espejo and Bong Nery followed at first and second positions, respectively. Tansecro garnered 56,753 kilos while Espejo and Nery have 49,398 and 45,185 kilos respectively. Light tackle and heavy tackle legs were also dominated by Tansecro and Espejo with the addition of Matt Tayag in the Heavy Tackle leg. The PCTF AOF awarding was held at Somethin Fishy Restaurant in Lilo.

70 fights up in PCAP tilt

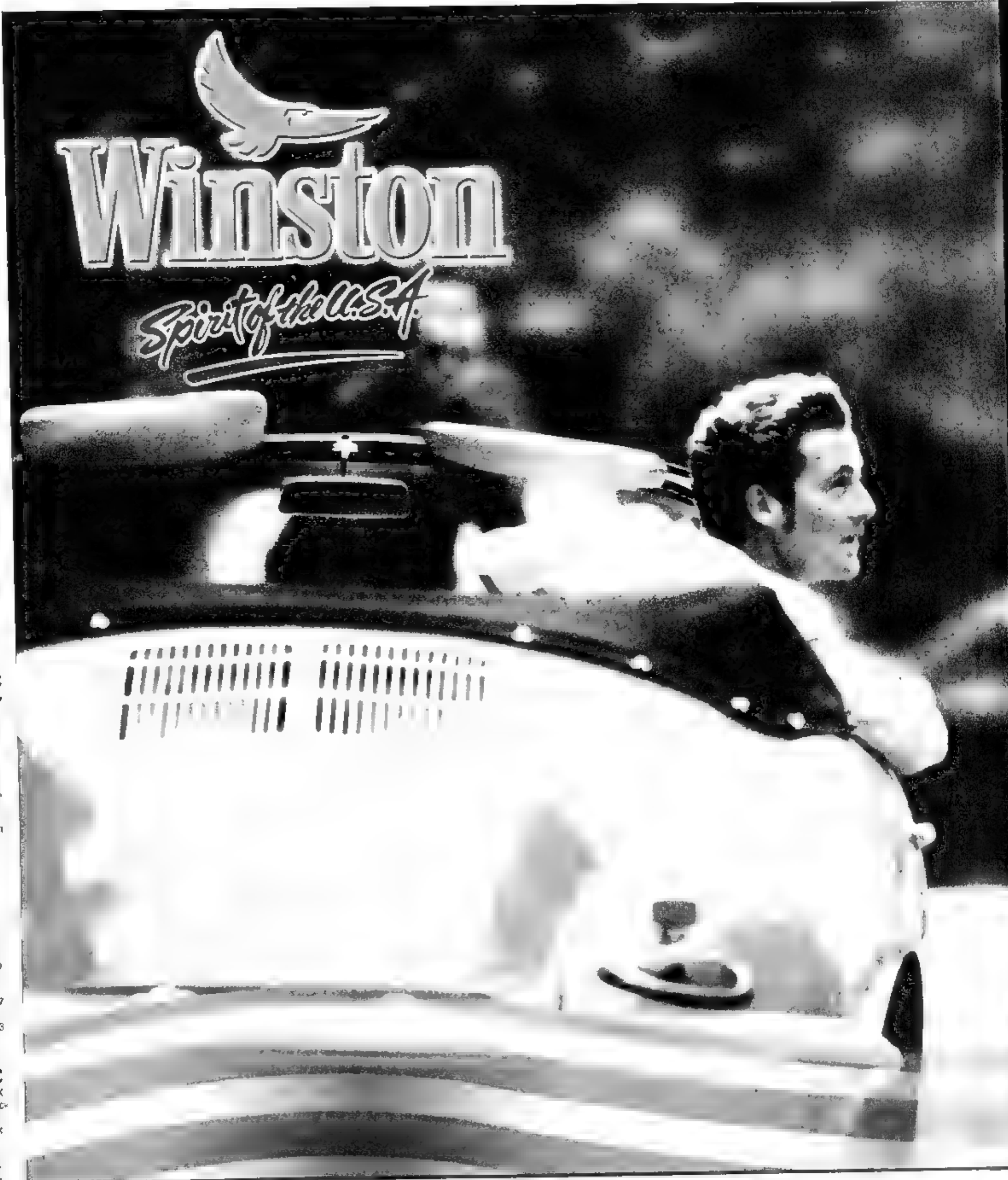
THE MAKAT COUSE-JIM-based Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) will hold a one-day 5-cock derby today featuring 70 fights. Act on starts at 5 p.m. The 30-member group has lined 12 5-cock derbies and an 8-cock to determine the PCAP Cocker of the Year. A total of P2 million awaits the winners. Also slated at the venue is the "FTE Happy Gamefarms 4-cock derby on Thursday with a prize pot of P300,000. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

6-cock event for 16th year

A SUPER 6-COCK derby offering a cash pot of P4 million will mark the 16th year anniversary of Roligon Mega Cockpit on Jan. 31, Feb. 2, 4, 7 and 9. Entry fee is P11,000 with the fastest win champion getting a brand new Toyota Innova. Host Roligon expects more than 400 entries. The venue has received 80 cockhouse reservations. A party plan may field an entry during the 2-cock eliminations on Jan. 31, Feb. 2 and 4. The semifinals and 4-cock finals are set on Feb. 7 and 9. For inquiries, call 1851-2275 or 833-1638.

NCA derby today at SJC

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association 7-Cock Derby kicks off two days of big-time cock fighting today at the San Juan Convention Center with Sagupaan Complex 3000 as sponsor. The 3-cock eliminations feature 58 fights. The 4-cock finals are on Wednesday. Hosts Dancy Valero and Phil Say will compete against a field that includes NCA stalwarts Rene Madina and Ricardo Guzman of California, Gov. Ilo Ynares, Rep. Butch Pichay, Jr., Santiago Patrick Amador, Manny Santos and Rudy Albano. For inquiries, call 725-5363 or 0917-8041691.



Government
Cigarette smoking is dan

TS

Suns off-key vs Jazz

Suns no to another flag-and-country stint

wins against the Pistons (2) as the rest of the NBA combined (3). The Pistons (26-5), losers for just the second time in 13 games, had their 10-game home winning streak snapped.

Chauncey Billups scored 19 of his 24 points after halftime for Detroit, and Richard Hamilton added 18. Ben Wallace had 16 rebounds.

In other games, Washington nipped Boston, 103-102; Atlanta tripped New Orleans, 101-93; Orlando ripped Charlotte, 108-92; Cleveland clipped Milwaukee, 96-88; Chicago crushed Memphis, 111-92; Dallas barely survived Minnesota, 83-79; Phoenix surprised San Antonio, 91-86; LA Lakers edged LA Clippers, 112-109.

In Phoenix, Tim Duncan has officially notified USA Basketball that he will not be a part of the US national team that will compete at this year's World Championship and the 2008 Olympics.

Jerry Colangelo, managing director of USA Basketball, said Saturday that Duncan's agent, Lon Babby, had called with the news earlier this week. Because of the call, Colangelo did not meet with Duncan when the San Antonio Spurs came to town this weekend.

After the Spurs' 91-86 loss to the Suns on Saturday night, Duncan confirmed his feelings on playing for the US team.

"I have no interest in that," he said.

Colangelo, chosen to form a team to bring the US back to world prominence in the sport, is requiring players to make a three-year commitment. The commitment includes a training camp in July, probably to be held in Las Vegas, as well as exhibition games in China and South Korea leading up to the worlds in Japan in August. There will also be another training camp next year.

Colangelo said he has met with 15 to 18 players, and Duncan was the first to say he would not take part. Duncan was part of the US team that won the bronze medal at the 2004 Olympics.

NBA on TV: Denver vs Houston, 9:30 p.m., Sports Illustrated (replay 9 p.m.); Miami vs Portland, 7:30 p.m., ESPN.



DALLAS forward Dirk Nowitzki (41) literally gets a taste of the Minnesota defense courtesy of Mark Madsen, who fouls the German superstar in the fourth quarter.

Valencia downs Tribu 5

VALENCIA CITY—Host Valencia Golden Harvest turned back former champion Tribu Sugbu, 70-67, Saturday to gain the top semifinal spot in the 5th Day Charter Open Invitational basketball tournament here.

Mayor Jose Galarza Jr.'s Valencia cagers unloaded a 25-9 bomb in the payoff period to seal the Tribesmen their first loss in the journey serving as the second leg of the Nature's Spring-NBC pre-season series.

In the other game of the series backed by Sulpicio, Spring, Molten and Prime Channel, Gov. Manny Pinol's North Cotabato Braves nipped the Aqua World-backed Pagadian Explorers, 73-69.

Semifinal games pitting the Tribesmen of Lito Gillamar and Mario King against the Braves and Valencia against Pagadian were being played at presstime yesterday.

The Scores:

First Game

VALENCIA 70—Navales 13, Ayson 13, Numanan 12, Cruz 8, Taligatos 8, Cesar 5, Beramil 3, Cabill 3, Clava 3, Braga 2, Cellz 0, Adams 0, Romaguera 0.

TRIBU 67—Calagiet 15, Almacin 10, Ducay 10, Bucio 9, Nido 8, Jrsal 5, Celo 4, Sevilla 2, Vabot 2, Butei 2, Luga 0, Mercado 0.

Quarters: 18-19, 33-36, 45-52, 70-67.

Second Game

NORTH COTABATO 73—Coronado 18, Ramos 15, Cier 11, Martinez 8, Reyes 6, Luge 4, Del Norte 2, Dagalan 2, Rinas 2, Gudes 2, Jawod 2, Cabanog 1, Samset 0.

PAGADIAN 69—Daja 16, Cudora 8, Isidro 8, Merata 7, Naron 7, Cortez 7, Salasod 4, Dimanadan 4, Sinto 4, Dayota 2, Singlas 2, Pamaran 0.

Quarters: 18-18, 32-33, 57-50, 73-69.

South hoop tilt slated

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (BAP) Region IV will be staging the 3rd Southern Tagalog Students Basketball Championship on Jan. 22 to 28, 2006 at the Similan Gym in Similan, Laguna. Held in cooperation with Similan Mayor Hon. Guillermo de Leon Asero, BAP regional director Johnny Tarn, regional commissioner Ding Andras, BAP provincial director Gil Tolentino and BAP R-IV general secretary Andrew Ayson, the event will serve as a qualifier for the 60th National Students Basketball Championships in February in Naga City, Camarines Sur.

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Zobel stars as Blues rip Blacks

By Jasmine W. Payo

IÑIGO ZOBEL PULLED OFF A TERRIFIC 10-goal spree as the Blues overwhelmed the Blacks, 17-11, yesterday in the Past Presidents' Cup, the maiden competition of the 2006 polo season at the Enrique Zobel Field of the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park.

Zobel, who was later adjudged Most Valuable Player, shot three quick goals



THE GREENS' Jake Zobel (center) makes a clean shot off the Blues' Sonny Borromeo (2) and Hiro Suzuki (right). On the left are Jose Constantino (3) and Alfie Araneta (4).

in the third chukker and strung up another three straight points in the next period of the six-chukker high goal match.

Backstopping the virtually unstoppable Zobel was Tonio Veloso, who chalked up four goals.

Seasoned player Wesley Pitcock spearheaded the Blacks' campaign with six goals, including a string of three in the final chukker.

Earlier, Jose Constantino scored in sudden-death to lead the Greens over the Blues, 7-6, in the low goal match.

Constantino, the Greens' team skipper, actually scored five times in the four-chukker competition.

Jake Zobel and Rosanna Yulo contributed one goal each for the Greens.

Blues captain Hiro Suzuki single-handedly carried his crew, scoring five of their goals.

Longshot spills No. 4 Baldonado

UNSEED Andrew Cooney upset no. 4 seed Johnwill Baldonado, 6-3, 6-4, yesterday to reach the 18-under quarterfinals of the 17th Andrad Cup at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Cooney will meet No. 5 Jose Lorenzo Opulencia, 6-2, 6-3 winner over Joandel Fernandez, in one of next Friday's last-8 pairings. In other matches, Russell Arcilla Jr. downed Neil Aldrin Ejro, 6-3, 6-2; No. 2 Leyan Moncera routed Mikoff Manduriao, 6-1, 6-2; No. 3 Romel Openiano blasted Richard Boticario, 6-0, 6-0, and Martin Ramos topped Julian Lagman, 6-1, 6-2. In the boys' 16-under play, unranked Horner Paulo Perez ousted No. 5 Raymond Padigos, 6-4, 7-5, to advance against Mario Espedillo, who prevailed over Justin Echague. Other winners were top seed El Santo Santos over Raymarc Santiago, 6-0, 6-0; Mark Balce over Val Aaron Taguinin, 6-0, 6-0; Vincent Alienza over Edwin Olivarez Jr., 7-6, 7-5; and Juan Fidel Regis over Nino Manguiat, 6-0, 6-0. The boys' 14-under quarterfinalists are Mark Cruz, Aldo Sy, Kyle Cordero, Roman Flores, Joseph Baldonado, Juan Gabriel Pera, John Alliche and Roman Lepoutre.

A tieup worthy of praise

THE BEST EXAMPLE of private support to a worthy sports undertaking is the longtime tieup between the Philippine Sportswriters Association and Photokina Marketing Corp., distributor of leading energy drink Red Bull.

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Inigo

For more than a decade now, the PSA and Photokina have joined hands to bring into focus the current sports issues and give recognition to outstanding athletes and officials, including business firms with hearts of gold through the weekly Sports Forum and the annual PSA Awards Night.

On Saturday night, Jan. 14, the victorious Team Philippines of the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games will be honored as "Athlete of the Year 2005" during simple awarding ceremonies at the Manila Pavilion. POC president Jose "Peping" Cjuangco will be the guest of honor and speaker.

This long partnership started in 1994 when I was the PSA president. Through our friend and *kumapadre* Nic Jorge of Milo BEST fame, veteran newsmen Gus Villanueva, who is now top gun at the Journal publications and I, were introduced to the soft-spoken George Chua, the Photokina EVP. The partnership has prospered mainly because of mutual respect and honesty.

In the past, the PSA had difficulty raising funds to host the annual Awards Night and the weekly Sports Forum, but Photokina came to the rescue by shouldering the major expenses. As lead sponsor, Photokina pays for the dinner, trophies and part of the television sponsorship. In 1996, the PSA even revived the Fiesta Fiestana, a charity card for destitute and disabled Filipino boxers, and raised close to P1 million. Incidentally, all the proceeds (up to the last centavo) were submitted to an audit by the prestigious accounting firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo.

The Red Bull team owner has a special place in our hearts for being sincere, fair and thoroughly straightforward.

NO NEED TO IMPORT FIGHTING COCKS. There is no need to buy from abroad fighting cocks that cost a minimum of \$500 per head because these cocks are no longer a guarantee that they will win in big derbies here. Local crossbreeds have been performing better than these imported cocks, as proven by Rey Briones, an esteemed colleague in the defunct Evening Post and now Remate executive.

Fielding his signature bloodlines—the locally-bred Spartan's Fire and Spartan's Blood—Briones emerged double champion in the recent "Pamaskong Salpukan" 6-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum.

"My fighting cocks are not for sale," Briones told this writer recently. "I am only in cockfighting because my passion is breeding champion gamefowl." He started breeding fighting cocks in 2003 with only 80 heads in his modest farm in Bacolod City. Today, he has about 2,000 cocks, 1,000 of which are ready to fight.

When he first made his presence felt in the Philippine cockfighting scene by winning the World Slasher Cup in 2003, Briones fielded only locally-bred cocks.

While on the subject of imported fighting cocks, how true is the report that a shipment of 350 three-year-old cocks from the United States arrived recently through a certain Mr. Tan? I gathered that some very influential cockers will be fielding these imported cocks in several international derbies. Did they pay the taxes for such importation?

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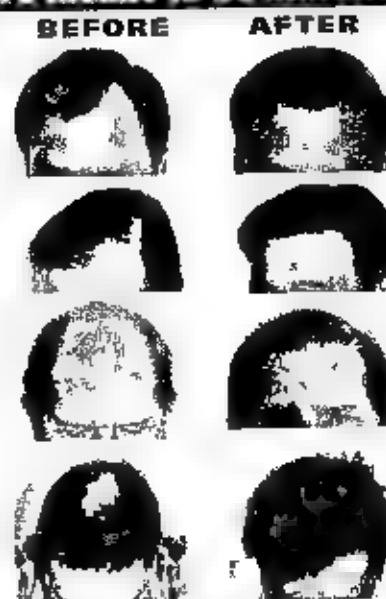
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ENTERTAINMENT

Cheers and jeers

From page A2-1

there [at Aliw]. The selection process [is] full of loopholes and full of biases." He added that he "smelled" politics.

Lamangan lost to Joey Reyes, who was named Best Director for "Kutob." (Lamangan revealed that, during the cocktails held before the program rites, two jurors told him that he had won).

He reiterated that he was against the judging process, not against Reyes or "Kutob." The

Best Director should go hand in hand with Best Story, Best Screenplay and other major awards, Lamangan maintained. He demanded a revamp of the board of jurors whose composition, he said, had remained the same for at least 25 years.

Just a forecast

On Jan. 5, the INQUIRER published the story, "Top contenders for MMFF awards," quoting



MARVIN AGUSTIN, Best Actor: "I worked hard for this."



MMFF official and juror Wilson Tieng. He predicted a Best Actor win for Marvin Agustin and Best Director for Joey Reyes (he was right). He also said "Kutob" star Rica Peralejo was a "dark horse" for Best Actress.

Tieng told INQUIRER Entertainment by phone on Saturday: "It was just a forecast. I did not reveal the identities of the jurors. I didn't even say I was among the jurors. I kept that bit of information a secret until the deliberation was over."



RICHARD GUTIERREZ, above left, is Male Star of the Night. His mother would rather he won for "Mulawin." Right, Lily Monteverde accepts Best Picture award for "Blue Moon." Her joy would be short-lived.

CHEERS/A2-5

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE NOW SHOWING

SNANG CINEPLEX	Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA	EASTWOOD CINEMAS
1 (10:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP	1 (9:00) ST. ANGE	1 (10:00) FAMILY STONE
2 (2:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP	2 (2:00) KING KONG	2 (2:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
3 (5:00) FAMILY STONE PG-13	3 (5:00) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 (5:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 (8:00) KING KONG PG-13	4 (8:00) FAMILY STONE	4 (8:00) KING KONG
PREMIERE	5 (11:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	
1 (10:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP	6 (11:00) CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	
	7 (1:00) DON'T GIVE UP ON US	
	8 (3:00) DON'T GIVE UP ON US	
	9 (5:00) ENTENG KABISOTE-2	
	10 (7:00) AKO LEGAL WIFE	
Cinema 2000	Blue Wave	Cinema 2000
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
starmall MOVIES	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
METROPOLIS	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 ENTENG KABISOTE-2	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 NARNIA	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
Cinemagix Pacific Mall	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
Cine Napa	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
Cine Napa	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG
Cine Napa	Mandalyoung	Cinema 2000
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 KING KONG	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG	4 KING KONG

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ROUNDUP

Pampi III

ACTRESS Jodi Sta. Maria is naming her firstborn son Panfilo Lacson III after her husband and his father, Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

In text messages she sent to a friend in ABS-CBN, Jodi said "Thirde" weighed in at 73 lbs and was 19.5 inches long when he was born at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California last Dec. 23 at 7:46 a.m., West Coast time.

Jodi said she gave birth by normal delivery after a 15- to 20-minute labor.

"Pampi was with me all the way," she said, referring to her husband. "He cut [the umbilical cord]." *Nini Valera*

Lou Rawls, 72

LOS ANGELES—Lou Rawls, the velvet-voiced singer who started as a church choir boy and went on to record such classic tunes as "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine," died Friday of cancer. He was 72.

Rawls died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where he was hospitalized last month for treatment of lung and brain cancer, said his publicist, Paul Shefrin. His wife, Nina, was at his bedside.

Rawls' deep, smooth voice was his trademark, and he used it in a variety of genres. "I've gone the full spectrum, from gospel to blues to jazz to soul to pop," Rawls once said on his Web site. "And the public has accepted what I've done through it all." *AP*



Hall of fame

VIDEO CITY, a leading video rental chain, was named 2005's Outstanding Filipino Retailer-Services by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Philippine Retailers Association. The rental chain was inducted into the Hall of Fame for winning two years

ward. Singam, Video City general manager, accepted the award.

'Direk' De Niro

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic—Robert De Niro met Friday with the president of the Dominican Republic at the beginning of his stay in the Caribbean island where he is filming scenes for his latest movie.

De Niro, 62, will film some scenes for "The Good Shepherd" in the presidential palace, which he toured with President Leonor Fernandez.

"The Good Shepherd" recounts the history of the CIA. Matt Damon plays James Wilson, one of the spy agency's founders, Angelina Jolie plays his wife.

Damon has arrived in the country, and Jolie was expected over the weekend. *AP*

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GLOBE PLATINUM
CINEMA

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NARNIA

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5:30 / 6:50 / 8:20 / 9:40

NARNIA

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2

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3

KING KONG

1:10 / 4:50 / 8:30

4

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Ang Inyong baga paghatid ng plar pa nggugulan
at ang mga ito ng mga Tuwing Bigwees



ABC

Cheers and jeers

From page A2-2

In a press statement, Monteverde demanded an explanation, "from this juror on comments he made to the press, which [seemed] to indicate bias and partiality."

Monteverde is also the producer of the horror trilogy "Shake, Rattle & Roll 2KS." "Mulawin The Movie" is a co-production between GMA Network Films and Regal Entertainment. Monteverde's son, Dondon is one of the co-producers of "Exodus: Tales from the Enchanted Kingdom."

Tieng pointed out: "I expressed my persona. opinions, not the jurors'."

Monteverde appeared to be particularly peeved about "Kutob" winning the Garpuno Antonio Villegas Cultural Award "[The movie] talks about nothing but murder and cruelty," she lamented. "Puro lang patayan."

Canary Films producer Only

Ilacad said he was willing to return the trophy. "They can take it back," he told INQUIRER Entertainment during a phone interview on Saturday. "I did not solicit the award. It was just given to us."

"Walang personalidad," Reyes said also on Saturday. "I don't have to explain why I won."

But Agustin defended his trophy: "I worked hard for this."

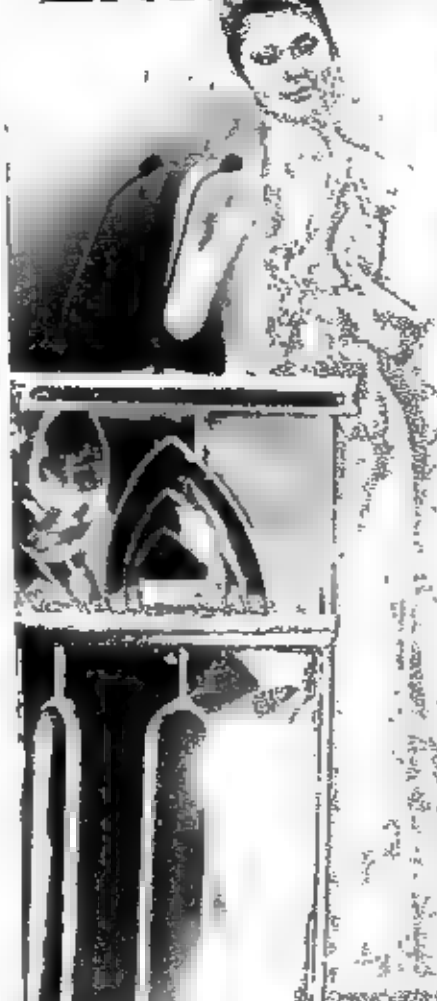
Annabel's beef

On the other hand, in an interview on the show biz program "Startalk," Annabel Rama, mother of "Mulawin" lead actor Richard Gutierrez, accused Monteverde of "manipulating" the results.

"Mulawin" had won nothing, in spite of the fact that it was the only entry rated A (for quality) by the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Monteverde's retort: "Annabel is one of the most misunderstood persons around. I forgive her."

The Regal matriarch said she would stop joining the film fest if



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, guest of honor, gave each of the participating producers a check for P1 million.

POPS Fernandez, pretty at the podium

no "changes in the system" were effected soon.

"I have been in this business for more than 40 years," she said, "and I have kept this in my heart. But now, I am going for justice. We are under a certain syndicate. I cannot prove it, but I feel it in my heart that there is some kind of Mafia [running the movie industry]. I couldn't voice this out [earlier] be-

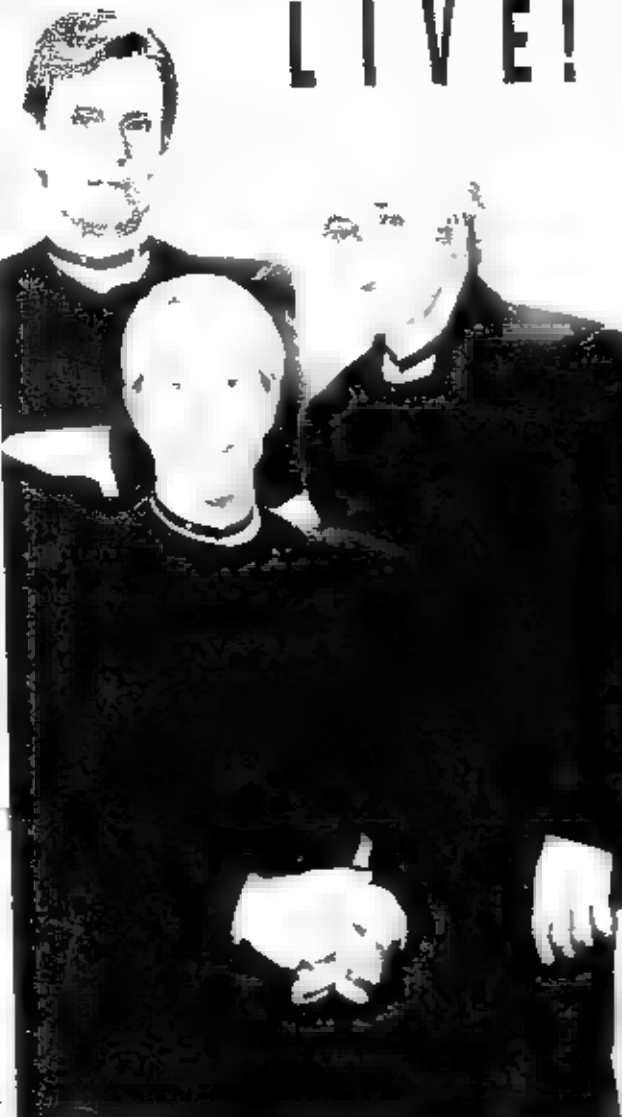
cause I was afraid they would not let me join the festival."

GMA Films president Annette Gozon-Abrogar likewise said she was "disappointed," even "depressed," when "Mulawin" scored a zero. She said she was eyeing at least three technical awards—Best Production Design, Best Musical Scoring and Best

CHEERS/A2-3

The Way You Look Tonight
When I Fall In Love
Our Winter Love
I Will Love You
Unchained Melody
Graduation Day
No Other Love
You'll Never Walk Alone
The Wonder of You
Young Love
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Time To Cry
Walk On By
She Cried
It's All In The Game
Seventh Dawn
Softly As I Leave You
I Believe
Venus
Portrait Of My Love
If Ever I Would Leave You
You've Lost That Loving Feeling
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Red Roses For A Blue Lady
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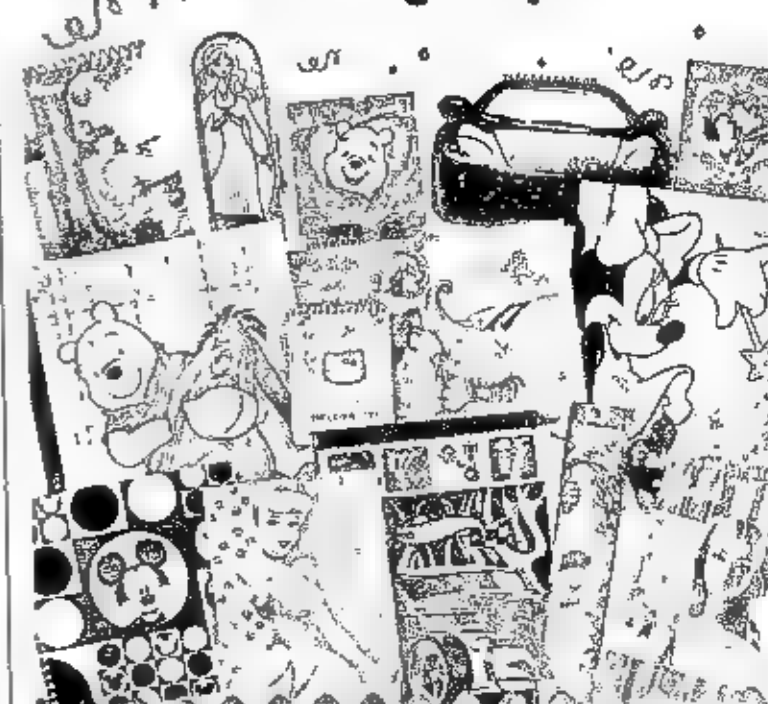
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Heart Of A Woman.

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based on a true story

A2-6

ENTERTAINMENT

Combustible cast for US 'Celebrity Big Brother' challenge

'Brokeback Mountain'

Now that "Brokeback Mountain" has become such a cinematic star and *cause celebre*, the film's local distributor would do well to advance its playdate here, to take full advantage

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

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Dennis
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Anna
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Smith
under one
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of its current headline-making cachet.

Feedback

"But our producers should also do their share by improving the quality of their movies, TV shows and albums. To solve such a big problem, only a concerted effort will succeed."

The lion is king

As for "Narnia," it has grossed \$250M, and the end is definitely not yet in sight. It's entirely possible that both films could peak around the \$600M level, providing a much-needed boost for the US movie industry's declining earnings.

Diluted storytelling

There's a lesson to be learned here: the TV version of "penny-wise, pound-foolish" and "don't throw the baby out with the bathwater"—or, more properly, "don't drown the baby by pouring in too much bathwater!"

Mr and Ms magazine

Other articles in the health and fitness issue are on acupuncture, vegetarianism, the health benefits of coconut oil, yoga, sensual massage, prenatal massage, eating disorders, negative spirits, past lives, relationships in a technological world, Tinging Cojuangco's talisman, and tips to bring good luck this year!

Champions League of 3

By Nini Valera

"It's his house, and I pay what I can," Kras said. "Jay-R knows that I'm not yet making enough money. But he also assured me that I would make it here [as a singer]. He also said the two of us might end up pitted against one another."

[illegible]



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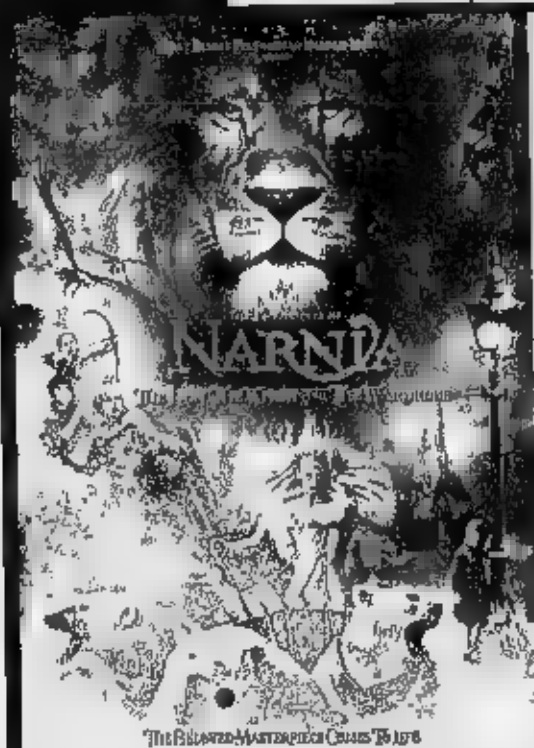


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3 ST. ANGE	8 EXODUS
4 THE FAMILY STONE	9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	10 AKO LEGAL WIFE

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2 AKO LEGAL WIFE BLUE MOON	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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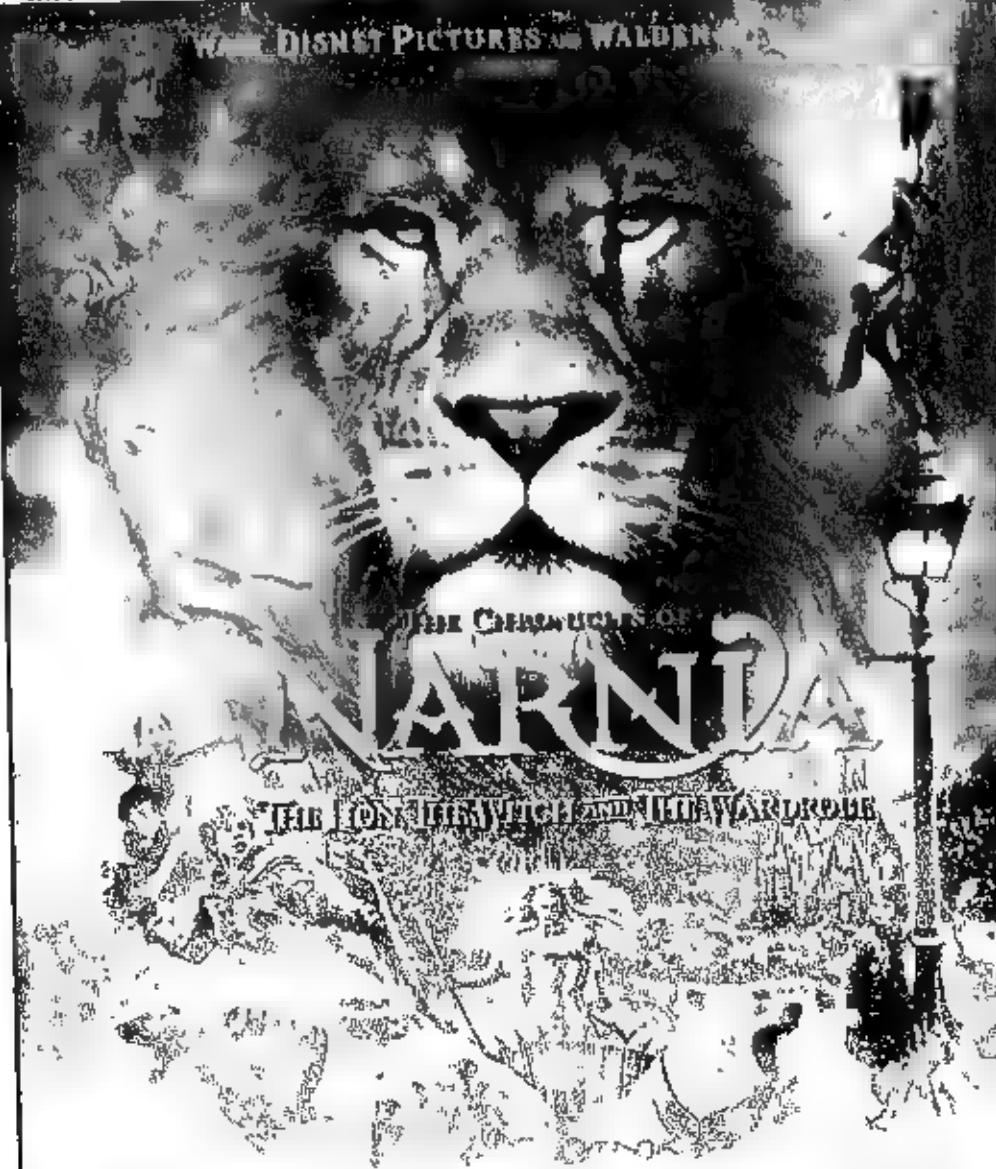
ENTERTAINMENT

Cheers and jeers

From page A2-5

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"But we respect the decision of the jurors," she said. "An award is not a matter of right but of privilege. 'Yun nga lang, feeling namin, sa...'"

President Arroyo was the guest of honor at Friday's event. Wearing a black sleeveless dress and high-heeled shoes, she arrived 9:45 p.m. at Aliw Theater and was ushered in by Bayani Fernando, Metro Manila Development Authority chief and over-all MMFF chair, and Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla, star of "Exodus."

The President left shortly after handing out the producers' checks. In 2003, she gave P50 million to the MMFF as incentive, last year, P10 million.

'Legal winner'

"Ako legal winner!" announced Best Actress winner ZsaZsa Padilla as she accepted her Best Actress award. With her onstage was long-time partner, Dolphy. She quipped, "I may not be Comedy Queen [too], but I have the Comedy King with me."

Reyes did not attend the proceedings. He was at Sharon Cuneta's 40th birthday bash [at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City], for which he was the creative manager. "I don't like awards shows because I hate dressing



PRODUCTION number introduces "Shake, Rattle & Roll." At center is Jose Manalo, Best Supporting Actor for "Enteng Kabisote 2."

IYA VILLANIA, winsome Star of the Night.



up," he explained.

Aia delas Aas came well-prepared, though, bringing with her three equally hilarious costume changes—first a pink number with a bubble-machine headpiece; then an outfit inspired by Cruella De Vil from "101 Dalmatians," with stuffed toy dogs for accent; and finally, what she called her "Ako Legal Wife" costume, a red and black ha-ter dress with a samurai headdress. She shared hosting chores with Paolo Bedones and Pops Fernandez.

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Local firms among most optimistic for '06

Global survey ranks RP 5th in level of business confidence

By Doris C. Dumiao

THIS NEW YEAR HAS TAKEN off with a dramatic upturn in business confidence in the Philippines from the cautious mood indicated at the start of 2005, an international survey showed.

The Grant Thornton International Business Owners Survey (Ibos) for 2006, which covered more than 7,000 medium-sized businesses across the globe, even ranked the Philippines 5th highest among 30 major world economies in terms of optimism on the

economy over the next 12 months.

The survey indicated that the balance between optimistic and pessimistic responses for this year tilted heavily to the favorable at +71 percent from +50 percent at the onset of 2005.

The outlook on the Philippines was thus among the rosier out of 30 countries included in the Ibos, next to India with a +93 favorable rating, Ireland (+84), South Africa (+80) and mainland China (+77).

The figures represent the percentage balance of the respondents who were optimistic and those who were pessimistic when the Ibos was conducted in November.

The favorable rating on the Philippines for the new year was even higher

than the outlook for Asian neighbors Singapore (+64), Hong Kong (+61), Malaysia (+36) and Thailand (+9).

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the more upbeat business sentiment in the Philippines was largely due to significant strides in the government's fiscal reforms, which were now attracting more foreign investments and resulting in the peso's sharp appreciation against the dollar.

Last week, global investors snapped up the government's new global bond offerings worth \$2 billion, with the huge demand forcing a lowering of yields.

Elsewhere in the world, the survey showed a shift in optimism away from the robust performers of recent years

such as the United States and United Kingdom while there was a major rise in optimism in the powerhouses of the 1960s-80s, Japan and Germany.

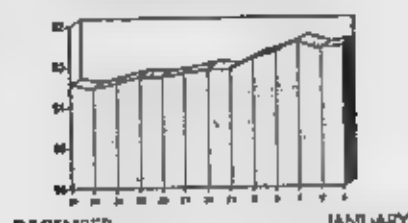
The confidence of business owners in the US on the economy dropped by nearly half from an optimism/pessimism balance of +62 last year to +32 this year and in the UK, from +46 to just +8.

Germany's balance this year surged to +41 from +17, -6 and -37 in previous years, while Japan, although still negative at -14, was seen on the cusp of a serious revival in confidence coming from the very pessimistic ratings of -27, -46 and -71 in previous years.

Other than Japan, other countries at the bottom of the heap that showed

LOCAL/83

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STOCK MARKET

Stocks seen to rise

ANALYSTS remain bullish on stocks this week due mainly to the strong peso and low interest rates.

"Other positive factors are the local currency's strength, interest rates dropping, oil prices flat, the possibility that the Federal Reserve will end its rate hikes, corporate profitability and strong balance sheets," AB Capital said in its report.

STOCKS/83

Merrill Lynch expects credit upgrade this year

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK MERRILL LYNCH has expressed optimism that the Philippine government will be able to substantially trim down its budget deficit to only P110 billion this year, noting that the credit outlook on the country might finally be upgraded.

The projected deficit will mean that

the budget gap would go down below 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) from 3.9 percent in 2004 and the expected 2.9 percent in 2005.

Merrill Lynch said a substantial boost to revenue-collection efforts would be the scheduled increase in the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 10 to 12 percent starting Feb. 1. The tax measure would yield about P77 billion in addi-

tional revenues a year for the government, the bank noted.

"After the February VAT rate increase, we expect the rating agencies to restore the rating outlook back to neutral," the bank said in its assessment of the Philippine economy.

Major credit rating agencies Standard & Poor's, Moody's Investors Service, and Fitch Ratings gave a negative outlook on

the Philippines last year, casting doubt on the government's ability to put its fiscal house in order due to delays in the implementation of the VAT Reform Law, considered the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda.

The new VAT law was finally implemented on Nov. 1 last year, after four months of delay, after the Supreme

MERRILL LYNCH/85

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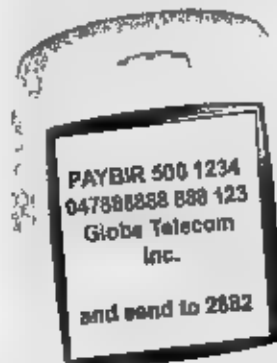
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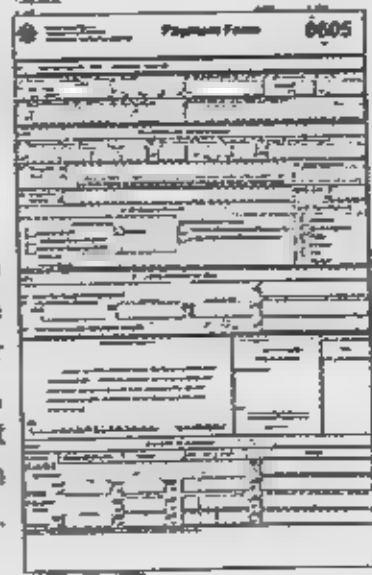
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BUSINESS

OFW remittances seen setting new record in '06

Gov't preparing package of incentives to encourage use of formal channels

PG 13

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Securities and Exchange Commission

By Doris C. Dumiao

REMITTANCES FROM OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers coursed through banks could surge to a new high of \$11.8 billion this new year, or 10 percent higher than the estimated inflow of \$10.7 billion in 2005, said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Including inflows coursed through informal channels or those unlicensed and unregulated, OFW remittances for this year may hit \$13.5 billion, which is likewise higher than the projected level of \$12.3 billion last year.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said this forecast, which was an upgrade from the institutions' previous assessment in October, was made in the course of the continuing review of the country's external payment position.

The BSP projected in October that remittances coursed through banks would reach \$11.3 billion this year.

Guinigundo added the BSP was now brainstorming on incentives that could be offered to OFWs to encourage them to send their remittances through banks.

Guinigundo said that under an executive order issued by Malacañang last year, the BSP was spearheading a task force on bank-related

initiatives to encourage OFWs to use the formal banking channels. The initiatives were focused on payment and settlement systems, financial savings and investments, international relations and advocacy campaign, he noted.

Inquirer sources said the BSP might even introduce a lottery system to encourage OFW flows through the banking system.

Based on a study on the Mexican experience, remittances held as deposits in the banking system have a beneficial multiplier effect of between two to three times as these could be channeled to investments including small and microbusinesses.

A study by the Asian Development Bank recently estimated that about 38 percent of the recipients of remittances in the Philippines preferred the informal system, primarily due to lower transaction costs.

In the meantime, Guinigundo said other government agencies were handling other initiatives to encourage remittances through the formal channel.

About eight million Filipinos are working abroad, of which three million are permanent residents in their host countries.

OFW remittances now account for about 10.5 percent of gross domestic product.

P10B earmarked for SM Group projects this year

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SM GROUP OF MALL TYCOON HENRY SY Sr. will invest about P10 billion this year in big ticket projects, including its largest mall in the Manila Bay area and a 10-story building that will cater to the thriving business processing and outsourcing (BPO) industry, SM Investments Corp. chief financial officer Jose Slo said.

The SM Group consists of mall operator SM Prime Holdings, Shoemart Inc. and the Sy family's property development subsidiaries.

SM Prime, which is launching its most ambitious project so far called 'The Mall of Asia,' is expected to receive the bulk of the investment budget.

SM Prime is spending P4 billion to P5 billion this year to put up new malls in Batangas (Lipa City), Bacolod, Sta. Rosa and Subic.

The SM Group is also investing P3 billion in a central business park near its Mall of Asia project that will house a 10-story call center

worth approximately P1.5 billion, among others.

The call center headquarter is expected to be completed in the first half of 2007. It aims to lure foreign companies that have been looking at the country for their expansion.

"The rental rates will be lower than the Makati rates," Slo said.

The Philippine call center unit of Dell Inc., the world's biggest manufacturer of personal computers, will be in the Mall of Asia complex. Dell will initially lease 13,000 square meters, but it is not clear if the computer giant would locate to the new call center building, which will have a total floor area of 100,000 square meters.

Dell's Philippine call center, its second in Asia, will handle calls from the company's customers in the United States and will hire 700 people. This may help boost customer traffic in the Mall of Asia, the most ambitious project of SM Prime Holdings.

IFC to extend more loans to RP

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

WORLD BANK PRIVATE SECTOR ARM International Finance Corp. (IFC) is extending more loans to the Philippines in 2006 worth \$125 million, country manager Vipul Bhagat said.

Bhagat late Friday told reporters that the 2006 loans would be an increase from the previous year's commitments worth at least \$103 million.

IFC is looking at boosting funding for housing, rural electrification, infrastructure and the banking and financial sectors, he added.

IFC also hopes to provide \$50 million to the proponents of the South Luzon Expressway upgrade, Bhagat said.

Toll operator Philippine National Construc-

tion Corp. (PNCC) and its joint venture partner, MTD Manila Expressway Corp., was supposed to start pre-construction activities for the rehabilitation, expansion and extension of the South Luzon Expressway.

In the housing sector, IFC last year agreed to provide a \$41-million (P2.25 billion) loan to Filinvest Land Inc., IFC's largest local currency financing to date. The World Bank unit hopes the loan will address the acute shortage in housing, and increase mortgage financing for lower and middle income buyers.

In the banking sector, IFC is looking at providing equity support for the proposed merger of Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Equitable PCI Bank.

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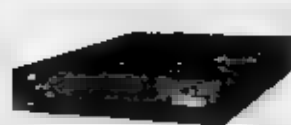
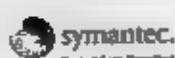
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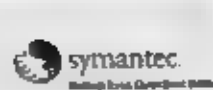
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MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2006

Tessie's gambit

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

SM HEIRESS TERESITA SY HAS AGAIN thrown a New Year surprise that has shaken the male-dominated banking industry out of its holiday hangover.

Both Equitable PCIBank chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and vice chair Winston Garcia, the GSIS president, were absent in Friday's executive committee meeting when the Sy's Banco de Oro merger proposal was tabled.

Romualdez was scheduled to arrive yesterday from the United States, but, according to the grapevine, he and Garcia had already indicated their disapproval of the BDO proposal.

The feisty Garcia had already been heard telling close associates that the merger terms would be "disadvantageous" to the Government Service Insurance System, with the

lawyer privately expressing his position in more passionate and colorful terms.

The Sy family already controls about 34 percent of Equitable PCIBank, and it is not clear how the GSIS, which has about 14-percent stake, and Romualdez, with the family's 8 percent, could block the putative merger, given that the Social Security System, which owns 29 percent, has a standing agreement—although questioned before the courts—to dispose of their shareholdings to the Sy group.

Should the SSS vote along with the BDO pro-

COCKTALES/B5

Stocks seen to rise ...

From page B1

Last week, the main index rose by 37.75 points or 1.8 percent. BPI Trade, meanwhile, said the market was banking on higher earnings in the fourth quarter of 2005. It also cheered the hike in the

VAT to 12 percent, the drop in the benchmark 91-day Treasury bill interest rates to below 5 percent and the international market's appetite for the government's \$2.1-billion bond offer. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Local ...

From page B1

pessimistic overshadowing optimistic responses were Italy (-8), Botswana (-12) and Taiwan (-19).

Overall, the survey showed that businesses in 26 out of 30 countries were optimistic about their economy's performance, and in 13 countries including the Philippines, sentiment improved over last year's.

Jun Rogers of Grant Thornton said: "This has been a year of uncertainty in some of the world's largest economies. Although all the hard economic growth indicators continue to be positive, there is an increased mood of pessimism which is hitting confidence."

The annual IfoS conducted by international membership organization Grant Thornton began in 2002, building on the European Business Survey, which it ran from 1993 to 2001. The research was conducted by Experian Business Strategies Ltd. and Harris Interactive.

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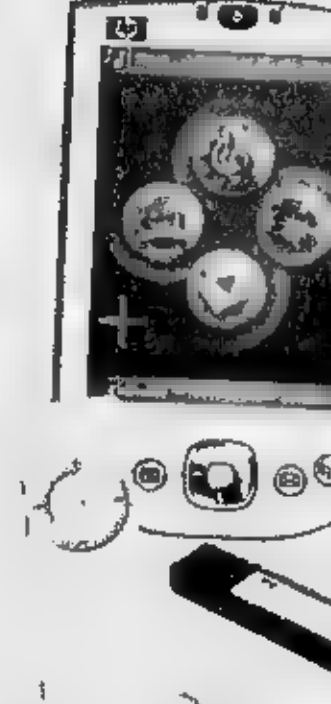
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BUSINESSMonday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Go after mismanaged utilities, GMA urged

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Firms laud Malacañang for championing consumer rights

MALACAÑANG SHOULD GO AFTER mismanaged power and water utilities and telecommunications companies that pass on their trample to their customers.

This was recommended by Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce, who lauded Malacañang's recent efforts to champion consumer rights.

"As President, she should protect consumers against and all inefficient, abusive and unreliable utilities," Chua said. "The Presi-

dent should be supported for championing public interest."

Chua said his group would back Malacañang's plan to take over Manila Electric Co. or other utilities in the name of public interest.

He explained that since all utilities operate on a franchise granted by the government, the government also has the right to revoke this franchise for mismanagement or consumer abuse.

Malacañang has confirmed that a government takeover of Meralco (through the conversion

of its P42-billion debt into equity in the country's biggest power utility) was one of its options in collecting on the penalty on management for switching its supply requirements to a Lopez-owned power producer despite an existing 10-year agreement with the National Power Corp.

Meralco's decision to buy power from more expensive power plants owned by the Lopez family was one of the reasons cited for the utility firm's high power rates.

"If Meralco can cut its customer's power connections for not paying a month's bill, I don't see why the government cannot enforce its right to collect on debts owed by Meralco to Napocor even if it means taking control of the company," added Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza.

But businessman Raul T. Concepcion said it was unnecessary for Malacañang to take over utility companies to protect the public interest.

"The task falls under the ambit of regulatory bodies such as the Energy Regulatory Commission," Concepcion said.

In the case of Meralco, Concepcion said the ERC should review petitions of power generation and distribution separately to ensure transparency and guide the public on the real costs of their power.

Chua said Malacañang should broaden its new-found consumer vigilance to include other utilities to show that it was not singling out Meralco or its Lopez-con-

trolled management.

He said Malacañang should also review the operations of other power, water and telecommunications firms and address any complaints by customers held captive by these providers.

Chua said the government should live up to its role as an independent regulator to ensure that the rights of consumers were not run over by giant utility firms.

"In normal times, we always want businesses run by the private sector. But this is a special case, and we believe the government will eventually pass on control back to a private entity," Chua said.

Learning from your mistakes

I USED TO THINK THAT AS I GAINED MATURITY and experience, I would make fewer mistakes. I thought, "I'm going to get better at this, because I made a lot of mistakes in the beginning."

I believed that there would come a day when I wouldn't make very many mistakes, because I'd get better. What I learned was that as I gained maturity and experience, I would continue to make mistakes, but I would learn more quickly from them.

What I found out was that I didn't lower my "mistake quota," but I learned better from my mistakes, and it's because of maturity. Maturity helps us learn more quickly from our mistakes and here are the reasons why:

1. We become more self-confident.
As we become more self-confident, we're willing to admit things that we would not admit if we had lower self-image.

2. We realize that mistakes are not usually fatal.

It was a happy day for me when I realized that when I make a mistake, it was seldom fatal. After you make a mistake and say, "Oh, I lived! I'm okay, I'm going to see another sunrise."

Then all of a sudden you say, "They're not as big of a deal as I thought."

3. We find that we make the same mistakes unless we learn from them.

Unless I learn from a mistake, I usually keep doing it over and over again.

You see, the question is not how many mistakes have you made; the question is how many of the same mistakes have you made? If I always do what I've always done, I'll always get what I've always gotten.

4. We understand that mistakes are unavoidable.

Look back at your early years. Can you think of the times you tried to avoid mistakes? You know what I'm saying? "Well, I'll just be careful. I won't make any mistakes here." Well, after a while, you just plunge in because you know the mistakes are unavoidable.

5. We see others make mistakes.

Wasn't it wonderful when you saw all the people that you admired make mistakes? You thought, "Oh, good night! Look where they are, and they blew it!"

The following illustration says a lot about life and learning from our mistakes. It comes out of a university commencement address many, many years ago by Brian Dyce, who at that time was the CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises.

He spoke about the relationship of work to one's other commitments.

"Imagine life is a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You can name them—work, family, health, friends, and spir-

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell



it—and you're keeping all of these in the air and you will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it'll bounce back, but the other four balls—family, health, friends, and spirit—are made of glass.

If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They'll never be the same, and you must understand that and strive for the balance of your life.

"How? Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others. It is because we are different that each of us is special. Don't set your goals by what other people deem important. Only you know what is best for you.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or for the future. By living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life. Don't give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying. Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect—it is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

By living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life. Don't give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying. Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect—it is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risk—it is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave. Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find—the quickest way to receive love is to give, and the fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly, and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you've been but also where you're going. Don't forget that a person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated. Don't be afraid to learn—knowledge is weightless, a treasure you can always carry easily. Don't use time or words carelessly; neither can be retrieved. Life is not a race but a journey to be savored each step of the way. Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift. That's why we call it the present."

(For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Gina. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless and Happy New Year!)

JIM COLLINS' GOOD TO GREAT (Random House, 2001) has attracted a good deal of attention from practicing managers. According to one observer, it has made the author "a guru to watch over the next decade."

I must admit that the book has great appeal. In addition to its attention-grabbing title, it is full of catchy phrases and imaginative choices of metaphors. Its simple, straightforward expository style is made doubly effective by the use of eye-catching imagery.

However, I have not included the book in any of my course reading lists, nor am I about to recommend it as a "must read" to any of my friends. I have a good number of reasons for being critical of this work.

Field procedures

The first thing that caught my attention about this work is the cavalier manner in which the sample firms were chosen.

The study was based on data generated from a "study set" consisting of 11 "great" companies and an equal number of merely "good" ones.

By any standard, this is a ridiculously small sample size, and by no stretch of the imagination can it serve as empirical basis for the many sweeping conclusions drawn from the study.

Even more disturbing is the fact that the sample firms were selected purposively on the basis of certain "criteria" rather than by employing the usual random procedures.

Because of this serious procedural lapse, the sample firms are far from being representative, and the observations drawn from them are at best hypothetical and merely reflect the author's biases.

Data analysis

From what I can discern, Collins'

MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Dr. Niceto S. Poblador



analysis goes something like this:

"The 11 great organizations exhibited certain common characteristics that make them different from their counterparts in the sample of good companies. These properties are essential conditions for being a great organization. By adopting any or all of these observed characteristics, any organization will enhance its chances of going from Good to Great."

I find this logic to be terribly flawed. Repeated observations of joint events do not imply causation.

For example, to conclude that promoting a CEO from within enhances an organization's chances of being great simply because great companies were observed to do so is a classic non sequitur.

Conceptual framework

One is struck by the austere simplicity of the graphic representation of Collins' "Conceptual Framework." However, this model grossly oversimplifies the complexities of organizational dynamics.

This reductionist approach pervades the entire volume and is unmistakable in the author's choice of unidimensional concepts. Due to space limitations, I shall limit my brief commentaries to only a few of these.

Level 5 leadership

The book develops the concept of "Level 5" Leadership, which Collins considers to be among a number of distinguishing characteristics of

great companies.

Yet, a casual reading of the recent history of corporate America shows that there are numerous Larry Ellisons, Richard Bransons, and Steve Jobs, larger-than-life leaders of highly successful organizations who are anything but the self-effacing, "aw, shucks" type envisioned by Collins.

Measures of performance

The book makes the curious suggestion that to aspire for greatness, good companies must focus on a single measure of performance—for example, profit per customer—in order to give them a better sense of direction.

Doing so, however, prevents an organization from viewing its operations from various perspectives. It also prevents them from exploring alternative directions for growth.

The Insider CEO

Collins argues that CEOs who have been promoted from within have better chances of leading their organizations to greatness than those who have been hired from the outside.

I think that a more acceptable conclusion from the study's limited data is that companies that have already achieved greatness are more likely to promote executives from within.

The book has great appeal to harried managers who yearn for simple formulas by which to "solve" the complex problems that they face. However, contrary to what this book promises, the brute fact is that there are none!

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Annual ritual

Corporate Securities Info

Raul Palabrica

fied and sworn to by the corporate secretary, president or any duly authorized officer of the company.

The postponement of the scheduled annual meeting does not excuse submission of the GIS. At least 10 days before the date of the annual meeting, the company has to notify the SEC of the deferment.

In this situation, the time frame for the GIS filing is counted from the date the annual meeting is finally held.

If the company has ceased doing business, it is nonetheless obliged to submit the GIS together with an affidavit informing the SEC when and why it stopped operations.

Financial data

With regard to the AFS, corporations can submit to the SEC the same document they earlier filed with, and stamped "received" by, the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The period for filing the AFS depends on the nature of the corporation. For corporations that do not have a secondary license (or authority to sell securities to the public), it's 120 days from the end of their fiscal year, as stated in the by-laws.

If they issue securities that are registered under the Securities Regulation Code, the period for filing is 105 days after the end of their fiscal year.

The profile and capitalization of the corporation determine the required signatories to the AFS.

The AFS of non-stock corporations

with annual gross receipts of least than P100,000 or total assets amounting to less than P500,000 may be attested and sworn to by their treasurer.

The same signing policy applies to stock corporations whose paid-up capital is less than P50,000.

If a non-stock or stock corporation exceeds the cut-off amounts mentioned, its AFS must be prepared and signed by an independent auditor.

Electronic copy

There is an additional filing requirement for companies that have annual gross sales or revenues of at least P10 million.

In addition to hard copies of the GIS and AFS, they have to submit diskettes that contain certain information about the company using a template prepared by the SEC.

Through computer technology, the data from these diskettes can be quickly transferred to the main data base of the SEC and, in the process, facilitate the verification of information earlier submitted by the companies.

Like their counterpart, the electronic version of the GIS and AFS have to be accompanied by a certification by the corporate secretary - in the case of the GIS—and the treasurer—for the AFS—that its contents are the same as those appearing in the hard copies.

Compliance with the annual reporting requirements is not difficult. For those who cannot the services of lawyers or accountants (or do not want to even if they can afford it), blank forms of the GIS and AFS are available at the SEC offices.

Or better still, they can access the SEC website at <http://www.sec.gov.ph> and download free of charge the required forms. (For comments or questions concerning this article, you may write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.)

ATTENTION PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS OF THE MIMOSA LEISURE ESTATE

This is to serve notice that the Mondragon Group of Companies ("Mondragon") is asserting its rights as the lawful lessee and developer of the Mimosa Leisure Estate ("Estate"), which the Clark Development Corporation ("CDC") is bidding out. In this regard, there are numerous cases between Mondragon and CDC pending in the Regional Trial Courts, Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Mondragon Leisure and Resorts Corporation is also the owner of improvements and all movables inside the Estate, which were not included in the writ of execution issued by the RTC-Angeles City on December 1, 1999. However, CDC is including said improvements and movables in the subject bidding. The issue of the validity of the writ of execution itself is still pending resolution in the Supreme Court. In another action for the return of the Estate also pending in the Supreme Court, Mondragon maintains that the P481 Million which CDC had received from the Estate from December 1999 up to February 28, 2003 alone, is more than enough settlement of the P325 Million compromise rental owed by Mondragon under the Compromise Agreement dated 28 June 1999 with CDC. Yet, CDC is collecting the said P325 Million from the winning bidder. Mondragon has also filed a separate action to enforce the said Compromise Agreement with CDC. The Court of Appeals already ruled that Mondragon has the right to pursue such action and CDC's appeal of said ruling is still pending in the Supreme Court.

Mondragon invested billions of pesos to develop the Mimosa Leisure Estate, which amount was sourced from about twenty-three (23) banks which have a total exposure of about P5.3 Billion in Mondragon. The fact that Mondragon was sourcing funds from these banks to develop the Estate was known to and consented by CDC. In this regard, Mondragon will extend full cooperation and assistance to its lender banks to make sure that they will not be prejudiced by the subject bidding. Mondragon will also exhaust all legal means to assert and protect its rights and interests over the Estate against all parties concerned.

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Big-P Country Club	550,000	600,000	
Callaghan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000	
Callaghan Golf Club "B"	78,000		
Camp John Hay	300,000	165,000	
Cannibara	550,000	490,000	
Capitol Hills	70,000	45,000	
Cebu Country Club		1,300,000	
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000		
Club Palapala	140,000		
Eastlake "A","B","C"	Plasma Cell		
Forest Hills "A"	140,000	100,000	
Forest Hills "B"	Plasma Cell		
Forest Hills "C"	160,000		
Manila Sports Club "A"	150,000	185,000	
Manila Sports Club "B"	250,000		
Manila Golf (Corporate)		Plasma Cell	
Manila Golf (Individual)		11,000,000	
Manila Road	2,200,000		
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	300,000	
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	600,000	
Manila Yacht Club	400,000		
Marblehead "A"	120,000	80,000	
Marmosa (Corporate)		450,000	
Mt. Mahabaryat Gold "A"	250,000	260,000	
Mt. Mahabaryat Gold "B"	350,000		
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	160,000	
Orchard Golf Club "B"		280,000	
Orchard Golf Club "C"	430,000		
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	150,000	
Rockwell	Plasma Cell		
Spe & Lodge	500,000	1,100,000	
Six Elena "A" 75%	1,300,000	1,500,000	
Six Elena "B"			
Tegayway Country Club	330,000	316,000	
Tegayway Highlands	750,000	550,000	
Tegayway Midlands	680,000	630,000	
Villa Verde (Individual)	30,000	85,000	
Villa Verde (Corporate)	200,000		
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INFOTECH

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Editor Leo Magno

Intel builds entertainment PC around ViiV

(For the complete version of this story, go to the Infotech section of www.inq7.net.)

By Leo Magno

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—INTEL CORP IS PUSHING a computing platform that it hopes would become the nerve center of digital entertain-

ment content in our living rooms and change the way we look at TV.

At the 2006 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) held here, Intel made clear its plans about the ViiV platform, a set of specifications for computers positioned as nerve centers for home entertainment. The ViiV platform is not just an Intel chip; it is built around a combination



of Intel-developed hardware and software.

ViiV computers could come in the traditional PC form factor that we know—with monitor, keyboard and big tower casing. Or, ViiV computers could come in small cases much like a set-top box for cable TV, although Intel refuses to call them set-top boxes because, it said, these appliances are fully functional PCs without the trimmings.

Thus, ViiV computers may come in the form of a PC or an appliance designed to store music, record TV shows, download movies, play online video games and serve up family photos and home videos. The appliance-like versions can even turn on like your ordinary household appliances. With the QuickResume feature, you just flick a switch and it's on.

The appliance and consumer electronics functionality of ViiV is in line with Intel's push toward digital home entertainment, the company's rebranding and new marketing strategy. The company last year restructured itself to focus on five platforms, one of them being home entertainment. It also recently dropped its 37-year-old logo as part of a major rebranding effort that emphasizes the chipmaker's shift away from its core PC business into consumer products. Which is also why ViiV was launched at CES.

At his keynote speech, Intel CEO Paul Otellini explained that the company started a massive shift from developing chips by ramping up their clock speeds to developing chips based on multicore processing, or having two or more cores in one processor. Intel has launched the Centrino Core Duo, the company's first premium brand product since the Pentium was launched in 1993. The first batch of ViiV PCs are powered by the Centrino Core Duo.

"The line between the PC and entertainment devices is blurring," said Otellini. "We are moving from a 2-foot viewing format to a 10-foot format."

By this Otellini meant that users now want to access their digital entertainment content in their PCs and view them from the comfort of their couches 10 feet away from their big-screen TV monitors, whereas before users could only do that two feet away from the monitors of their desktop PCs.

"That's why we built the ViiV platform from the ground up. It's a combination of hardware and software that deliver rich media experience and make entertainment devices and content easy to integrate."

ViiV thus acts as a nerve center for digital content to manage files such as MP3 music, digital photos, home videos, on-demand movies, downloadable games and other digital entertainment content. But instead of using your computer monitor, you hook it up to your TV to combine the best of both worlds. Intel said ViiV PCs are not just digital video recorders like TiVo which allow users to record and buffer TV shows for instant replays and on-demand viewing. ViiV manages all forms of entertainment as long as its digital.

Intel itself does not manufacture ViiV PCs. It merely developed the platform and specs. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) such as Acer, Fujitsu, D-Link, LG, Linksys, Lenovo, Huawei, Onkyo, Sony and HP are manufacturing ViiV appliances. More are expected to be released within the quarter. OEMs call their products "digital media adapters" or "network media players" or "wireless media players." They are all, in general, ViiV PCs that act as digital entertainment nerve centers.

As Intel continues to shift from making chips to building platforms, is Otellini acting like Kevin Costner in "Field of Dreams" when he heard a ghostly whisper saying "build it and they will come?" Intel is betting on it. And come they did, content partners and OEMs all came to join the ViiV bandwagon.

As Otellini himself said, "the platform doesn't matter without content."

More than 40 companies are providing content services to ViiV. Some will be subscription based, some will be free. NBC Sports, for example, will stream its coverage of the Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, to users with ViiV-compliant boxes. AOL is streaming reruns of classic TV series for free, as the shows are supported by advertisements. DirecTV is offering its own ViiV box so that the satellite signal would go straight to the nerve center instead of to the TV receiver. Televisa, the largest Spanish news program will be on ViiV, as well as the Chinese shows of Shanghai-based SMG.

Movies-on-demand are also inching closer to the home. At the CES, Otellini called onstage Hollywood stars Tom Hanks, Morgan Freeman and Danny DeVito to discuss the ClickStar broadband digital entertainment venture. ClickStar will make movies available via download, starting with the movie "10 Items or Less" which stars Morgan Freeman and Paz Vega.

The assumption, of course, is that the ViiV user is online with a broadband connection. Once the network goes down, the service does, too. Case in point was the live demo of Yahoo! Inc. chair and CEO Terry Semel at CES, who was using a ViiV appliance running on Windows XP Media Center Edition. The network went down and the ViiV operating system stalled, cutting short Semel's presentation on Yahoo!'s new cross-device services. Semel had to call onstage Hollywood star Tom Cruise to yank him out of the embarrassing situation.

One perennial problem with technology is that devices are created and fixed faster than business concerns. While handheld video devices, digital audio players and high-end cell phones are ready to receive a smorgasbord of content, issues on digital rights management and business models have yet to be answered. Content providers are still grappling with intellectual property concerns with the advent of video and audio download. They are also concerned about new distribution models that veer away from tried and tested ones such as via cable. The same could be true with ViiV, which is creating new distribution models not just for audio and video but also for the entire encyclopedia of digital entertainment content.

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The CEO Excel Awards recognizes senior executives who have successfully harnessed communication in advancing the reputation, enhancing the profitability, or achieving major objectives of their organizations.

This annual competition aims to raise public awareness of the importance of communication in business and organizational management; to recognize the top-level executives or managers who have shown extraordinary skills as communicators; and to present their accomplishments as models of best practices in organizational communication.

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LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
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• THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

MALANG at the opening of his one-man exhibit in Taipei, Taiwan, ROC in June 1980. Among his guests were Ang Kiukok (left) and James Onglepho (right).



MALANG is celebrating his 78th birthday with an art exhibit at SM Mega Art Center on Jan. 20.

Mauro Malang Santos and James Onglepho share a 50-year friendship that has benefited Philippine art. The latter remembers the good times



MALANG at work in his studio (1980)

THE CHOPSTICKS CLUB

Malang and I

By James Onglepho
Contributor

I MET MALANG FOR THE first time at the Philippine Art Gallery in November 1956. Malang then was working at the Manila Chronicle. Through him, I also met Liborio Gatbonton (Gat), the art editor of the Manila Chronicle.

We became good friends, and every Thursday night, I would visit Malang and Gat at work with other artist-friends. Then we would proceed to a Chinese restaurant in Ongpin. Thus, the "Chopsticks Club" was formed.

After dinner, sometimes we would take a taxi to the cabaret in Sta. Ana. Mostly playing at the cabaret was sweet music. Once the music started, customers would enter the dancing hall, and then pick from about 200 hostesses on standby.

We weren't good dancers, so we just followed the music and swayed our bodies while our feet remained still. After the dance, we would hand over our tickets, worth 20 centavos each, to our dance partners. We would leave the dancing hall again, and wait for the next music to play.

We usually spent about two to three pesos for the whole evening, and every minute was worth it.

Just like the cabaret, we also looked forward to visiting the Philippine Art Gallery, Contemporary Art Gallery, and other galleries on Mabini.

Among us, Malang is the most mild-mannered. He is a soft-spoken man with an easy grin. And when he smiles, you can barely see his eyes.

His "Chinese" fea-

tures do not end there. He is also very much interested in Chinese culture. He likes drinking tea, uses chopsticks when dining, and even hangs out in Chinese bookstores for hours like a true-blooded Chinese. He can be easily mistaken for a humble, friendly Chinese scholar.

Newspaper artist

Born in 1928 in Manila, Mauro Malang Santos used his mother's name as artist pen name in loving remembrance of his mother. He studied at the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts for only half a semester, and then began looking for work.

In 1947, he tried applying for a job at an advertising company on Dasmariñas Street, Manila. Seeing about 200 people in line for job interviews, he thought he didn't have much of a chance of getting hired.

Then, passing by Jones Bridge to Intramuros, Aduana Street, he saw the sign, "Wanted: Art Assistant," beside the door of the Manila Chronicle building. He went inside and gave it a try. Malang impressed his interviewer, and was offered the job immediately.

After one week, though, Malang also heard from the advertising company where he first applied. The letter, which was sent by special delivery, indicated that Malang also passed that earlier job interview. At the time, Malang was already with the Manila Chronicle. His life would have been totally different if he got into advertising first.

At the Chronicle, Malang was in charge of the art design and layout. He also drew cartoons. His starting salary was P120 a month, and by the time he resigned in 1964, he was earning as much as P250 a month.

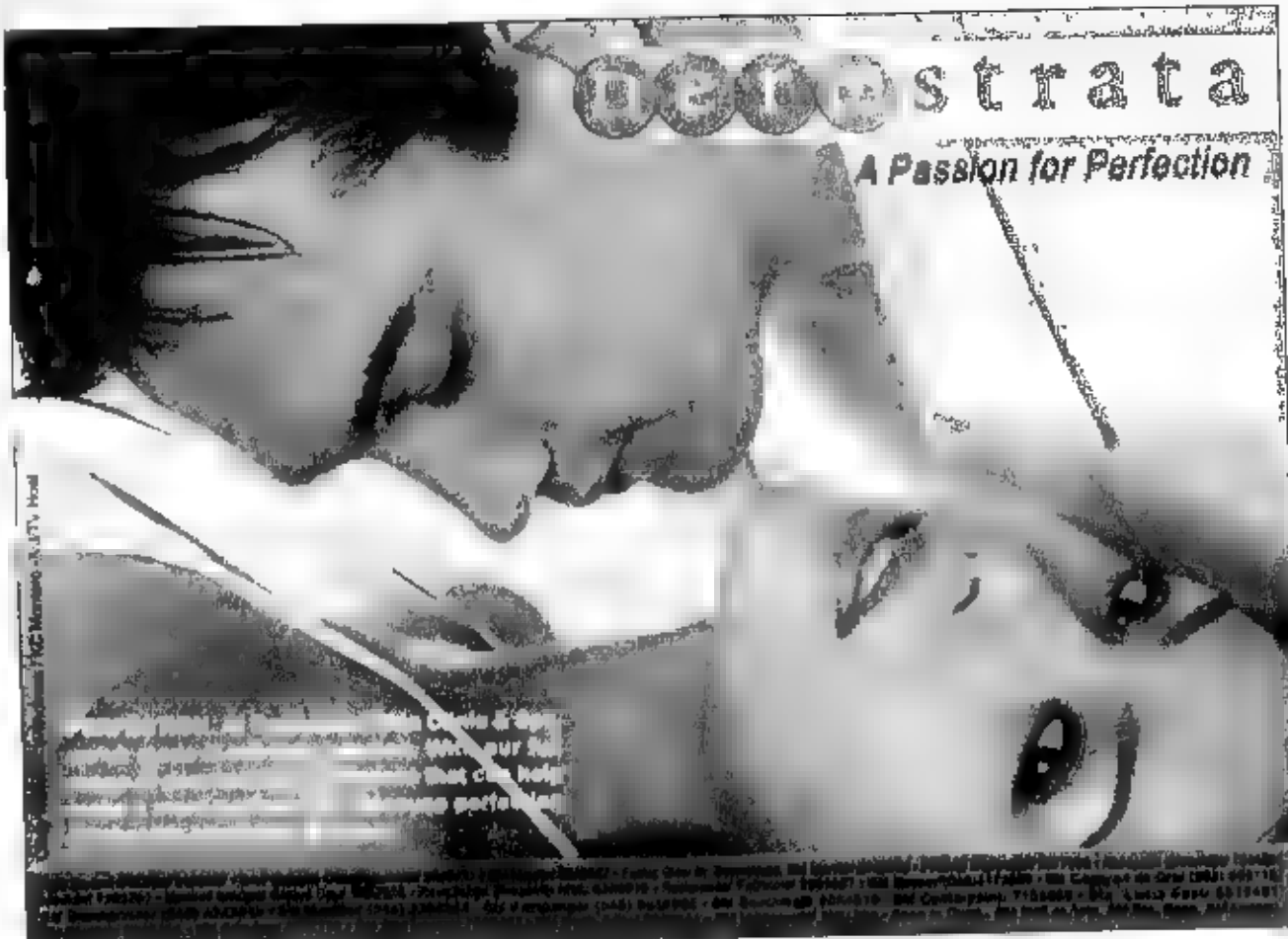
Biggest perks

His biggest perks, though, were meeting noted painters like Vicente Manansala, Carlos "Botong" Francisco and H.R. Ocampo, who were all major artistic influences.

MALANG/C

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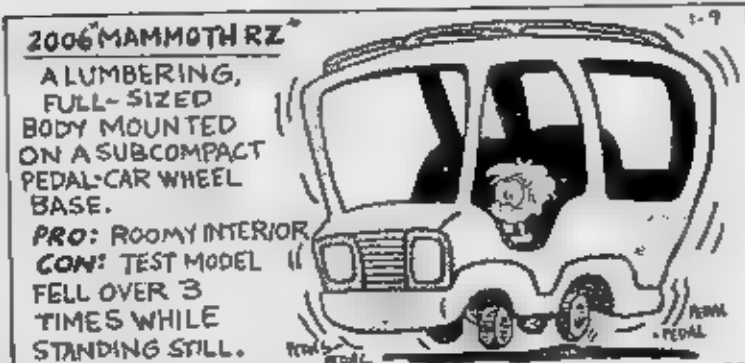


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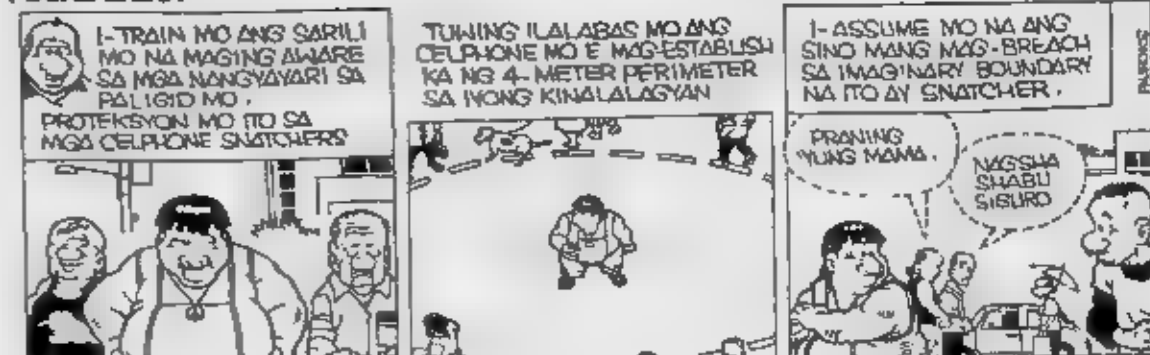
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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're willful, purposeful and resourceful. You get what you want. You work patiently for your goals. Essentially, you're ambitious. You constantly strive for new and higher standards for yourself. In the year ahead, you will say goodbye to some things and let go of other things in order to create space for new things to begin.

Birthdate of: Grace Fields, comedian; Joan Baez, singer; Simone de Beauvoir, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The year 2006 will bring you good fortune through the wealth of others. People will let you use what they own. You might inherit or receive gifts. Lucky you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is definitely a year to improve your job! You might get a new job, your evil boss might move on, or you get new duties that you like. (Sounds good to me.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Home, family and real estate matters will be enormously rewarding for you this year. You will truly enjoy time spent at home with your family. Your private life will be enriched.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In this coming year, all your closest relationships will improve. Partnerships will become lucky for you. They will certainly be a source of joy.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is the year to plan a vacation. Some of you will also increase your family through having children. It's a wonderful year for play and romance!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You feel unusually optimistic and happy this year. The reasons will be different for each of you, but I do know that you have greater faith in your future. Relations with siblings will improve.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's your turn to earn more money this year. Expect it, and it will come. Of course, you have to get out of bed. (Unless you make a living testing mattresses.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): For the first time in 12 years, lucky Jupiter is in your sign. This attracts many opportunities and influential people to you. It's a fortunate year for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): In a quiet way, your inner, spiritual world will be stirred this year. You want to touch base with something that is meaningful to you deep within.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You can expect your popularity to increase in the coming year. Meet new friends. Be friendly. Join clubs and organizations. Be open to new faces.

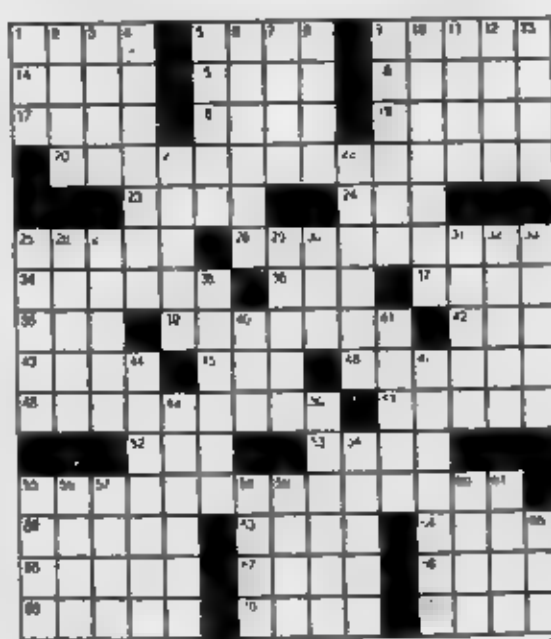
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Lucky Jupiter is slowly moving across the top of your chart. This bodes extremely well for your career. Expect job opportunities that please you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Opportunities in publishing, travel and dealing with foreign countries are likely in the year ahead. Many of you will explore educational and training benefits as well.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

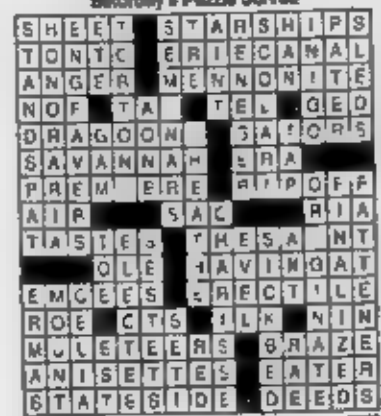
- 1 Wild guess
- 5 Gravy or love follower
- 8 Book of the world
- 14 Medicinal portion
- 15 BMW rival
- 16 Recumbent
- 17 Worldwide, briefly
- 18 White dwarf or red giant
- 19 Five, pref.
- 20 Olympics runner-up
- 23 Korea/China border river
- 24 Sick
- 25 In trouble with
- 28 Glowing gas
- 34 Petalad baby's back
- 36 Punter's digit
- 37 Looser or slipper
- 38 deco
- 39 Small-time gambler
- 42 Pub potable
- 43 North Pacific salmon
- 46 Great Lakes canal
- 46 Official seal
- 48 Steam locomotive
- 51 Refuse
- 52 Witnessed
- 53 Pere's partner
- 55 Hollywood bombshell
- 62 Kidney-related
- 63 First of 13
- 64 Far down
- 66 Type of orange
- 67 Bridge position
- 68 Charbourg she
- 69 Wined and dined
- 70 Apart from this
- 71 One Simpson



By John Underwood
New York, NY

1/9/06

Saturday's Puzzle Solved



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- 4 Bankrupt
- 5 Swiss city on the Rhine
- 8 Overtake and pass
- 7 West or Arkin
- 9 Wear out
- 10 Disgust
- 11 Ivy supporter
- 11 Anderson, of "WKRP"
- 12 Aardvark food
- 13 Pants part
- 21 Gentleman's gentleman
- 22 Restaurant patrons
- 25 Summers in the Far East?
- 26 Hultabakoo
- 27 Correct, pref.
- 29 Cultural values
- 30 Tie-tac-toe win
- 31 Lake Volta location
- 32 Gaffer's targets
- 33 Saw's cutters
- 35 Repudiate
- 40 Neighbor of Sweden
- 41 Funny-car fuel
- 44 Performing
- 47 Beowulf's monster
- 48 Greeted
- 50 Decorate with a raised design
- 54 In crowd
- 55 Univ. teacher
- 56 majesty
- 57 Art school subj.
- 58 Peter Fonda title role
- 60 Sub shop
- 61 Shocking swimmers?
- 65 Woe vegetable

MIKROKOSMOS



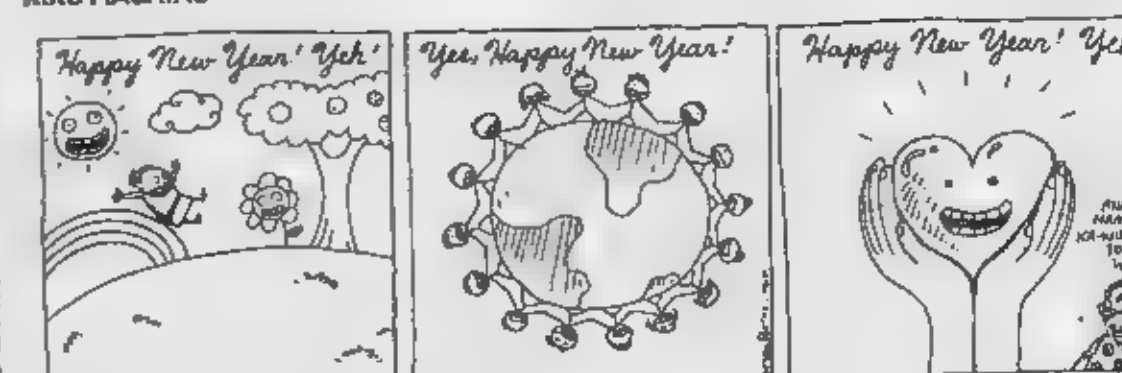
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN



BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE



BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONG-O

TULDOK



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

Rock Drilon holds simultaneous exhibits at Mag:net



"NO. 56"

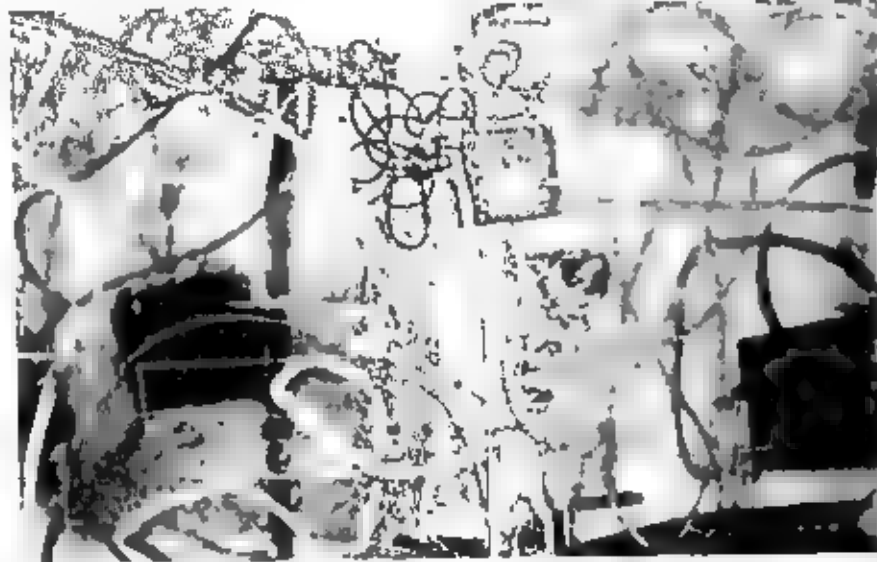
JUMPSTARTING MAG-NET'S CALENDAR for 2006 is an exhibition by Rock Drilon of paintings spanning the last 20 years of his artistic practice.

The paintings, mostly done in acrylic, according to him, are the accumulated "outpourings, testaments, koans spun from the multiple neurons of thoughts and emotional states based on actual personal events, however indirectly, or from spontaneous outbursts of creativity."

"Diaristic," the show, charts Drilon's departures and returns to specific forms and motifs he has used in most of his works, such as the spiraling serpentine knot that may be traced to the earliest painting included in the show.

One in a series of paintings done in 1986, "No. 56" is a hydra spawned out of a box, blooming in its green indelicence, with its ends, though stumped, seemingly lurching on deceptively benign.

Through the years the hydra forms have become ominous, intertwining with other forms of colored planes, anamorphic geometric solids and axes,



"RESONANCE (Dyptych)"

organic brain-like tubings and gourd-like shapes. In some, these are contrasted by short brisk strokes, feathering in luminous swathes of white, suggesting shedding and stripping over splattered and blotched patches that are to Dubuffet "impressions of teeming matter evoca-

tive of all kinds of indeterminate textures, including galaxies and nebulae."

All evoke movement, more than in the arbitrarily layered composition, but also in the diverse application of paint, contrasted by the channeled energy with which Drilon sparks each one.

Drilon said he associates the way he paints to dancing. He explained he moves around the canvas, picking up pace or dallying through the slow waltz of a sweeping stroke.

Hence, "Dance," which is painted directly on the walls of the cramped CR Gallery of Mag:net Café in Katipunan, is Drilon's ballet of solitary creation.

However reconfigured the recurrent themes in his works, Drilon pointed to the idea of a Gordian knot persistently wound and unwound, which he said rings true of his struggle with the idea of creation, "as primordial as the universe itself."

Drilon's paintings are simultaneously on view at all Mag:Net galleries: until Jan. 15, at ABS at The Loop, ABS-CBN, ELJ Compound, Mother Ignacia Ave., Quezon City; until Jan. 30, at Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City; until Jan. 30, at Katipunan, Quezon City; and until Jan. 15, at CR Gallery, at Mag:net, Katipunan.

Call 9293191 or 4352631 E-mail magnetcafe@atps@yahoo.com.ph or visit www.magnet.com.ph

Malang and I

From page C1

In 1955, he, along with colleagues Gat, Larry Alcala, Elmer Abustan and Hugo Yonzon Jr., put up a gallery called Bughouse near Mabini Street. It showcased purely cartoon drawings.

Malang also began using watercolor and oil in depicting one of his earliest subjects, the barong-barong. Asked about his fondness for the barong-barong, Malang said that he saw so many of them right across the Manila Chronicle building every day. His paintings expressed how he felt for those barong-barong dwellers.

First solo

In 1959, when I was mounting my first one-man exhibit at the China Art Gallery beside the Manila Hotel,

Malang interviewed me at the coffee shop on the second floor of the Manila Chronicle building.

We spoke lengthily, which then resulted in a four-page article to introduce my painting style in This Week, the Chronicle's Sunday magazine.

Some three years later, it was Malang's turn. He held his first one-man exhibit on Oct. 20, 1962 at the Philippine Art Gallery, where his paintings were sold at P30 each.

Malang was largely self-taught, but his works were definitely of high standard even when he was just starting. It was a very successful exhibit, launching his high stature in the Philippine art circle.

Reunion

In the 1980s, I spent my time mostly in Taipei. From 1982-1984, I exhibited my works in Kaoshung and Taipei.

In 1992, though, I realized that my roots were in Manila. I haven't gone back to Taipei to mount exhibits since.

In August 1997, Malang, Ong Bungian and I got together again. We agreed to meet every Thursday at the Asia Art Gallery, Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Every week, one of us would take turns in hosting the lunch.

One Thursday in June 1998, Bungian didn't show up.

Malang and I proceeded to National Bookstore, I bought a 12" x 18" sketchbook, and then we decided to have lunch at the food court in the basement.

I went to the counter to order food, and left my sketchbook with Malang who went to find seats. After our lunch, we drank coffee and stayed at the Asia Art Gallery until 4 p.m.

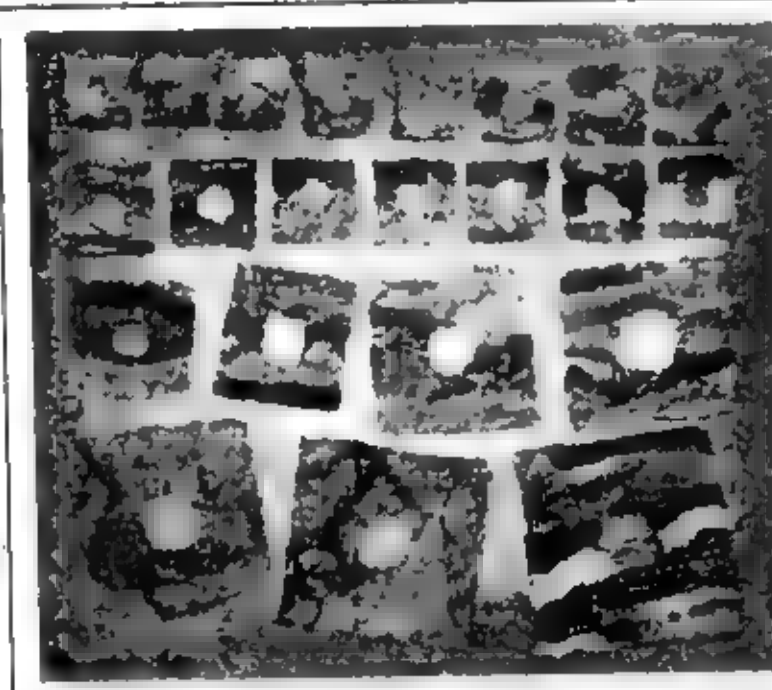
When I got home, I brought out the sketchbook I bought, and saw that the first and second pages were filled with unfinished nude sketches. I wondered if it was a mistake, but I guessed Malang might have been the one who drew them. He might have found the time to do them while I was ordering food, and was discreet

enough to seal the sketchbook back like it was never opened.

When we saw each other again at the Asia Art Gallery, I showed the sketchbook to Malang, and told him, "Pag ginuhit mo lang ilang lines, sinasayang mo lang 'yung sketch pad ko. Kaya pakiusap lang, tapusin mo na ito. At isa pa, 'wag mong kalimutan 'yung signature mo."

In less than two hours, he was finished with the two fine sketches. They were dated June 6, 1998, and it was the first time that I received artworks from Malang.

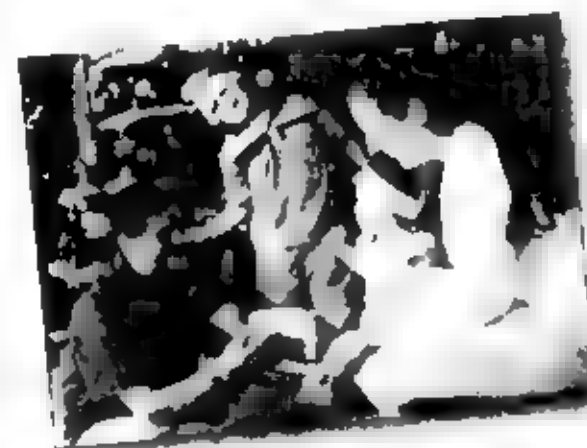
Malang is celebrating his 78th birthday with an art exhibit at the Art Center of SM Megamall on Jan. 20. The show is curated by West Gallery.



LIM AT WEST

Lewanda Lim will mount "Lewanda's Fabrications," Jan. 12-24, at the West Gallery (4/L Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong). Lim will present 15 recent fabric collages, done over the last six months, products "of my love for collecting odds and ends of varying materials." Call 6341284.

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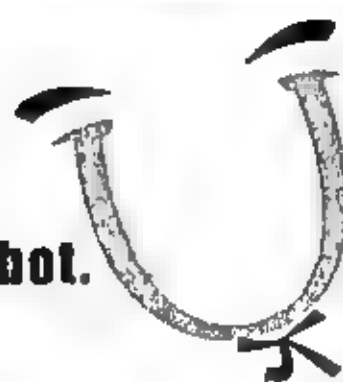
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Ballet Manila conquers Russia

BALLET MANILA, ONE OF THE Philippines' foremost classical dance companies schooled in Russian techniques, made a well-applauded debut last month in Yekaterinburg, an industrial city best known as the site of the martyrdom of Tsar Nicholas II and his family during the Russian Revolution.

The 26-member troupe, led by ballet master Osias Barroso, delighted Russian audiences last Dec. 11 and 13, at the 1,200-seat Dvoretz Molodezhi (Youth Palace) concert hall at the 1905 Square in the center of the Yekaterinburg, the third stop in a 16-day, seven-city tour of Russia's highly industrialized Ural Region, which traditionally forms the divide between Europe and Asia.

The highlight, Barroso said, was the sustained applause given by the audience for a purely Filipino program that included OPM (Original Pilipino Music) hits—well-loved favorites by Filipino-American audiences in past tours in the United States but all but unknown in Russia.

"We were quite surprised with the reaction of the audiences here," Barroso said. "They laughed, expressed surprise and clapped at the right moments."



BALLET Manila dancers in front of the theater in Chelyabinsk showing the Ballet Manila poster

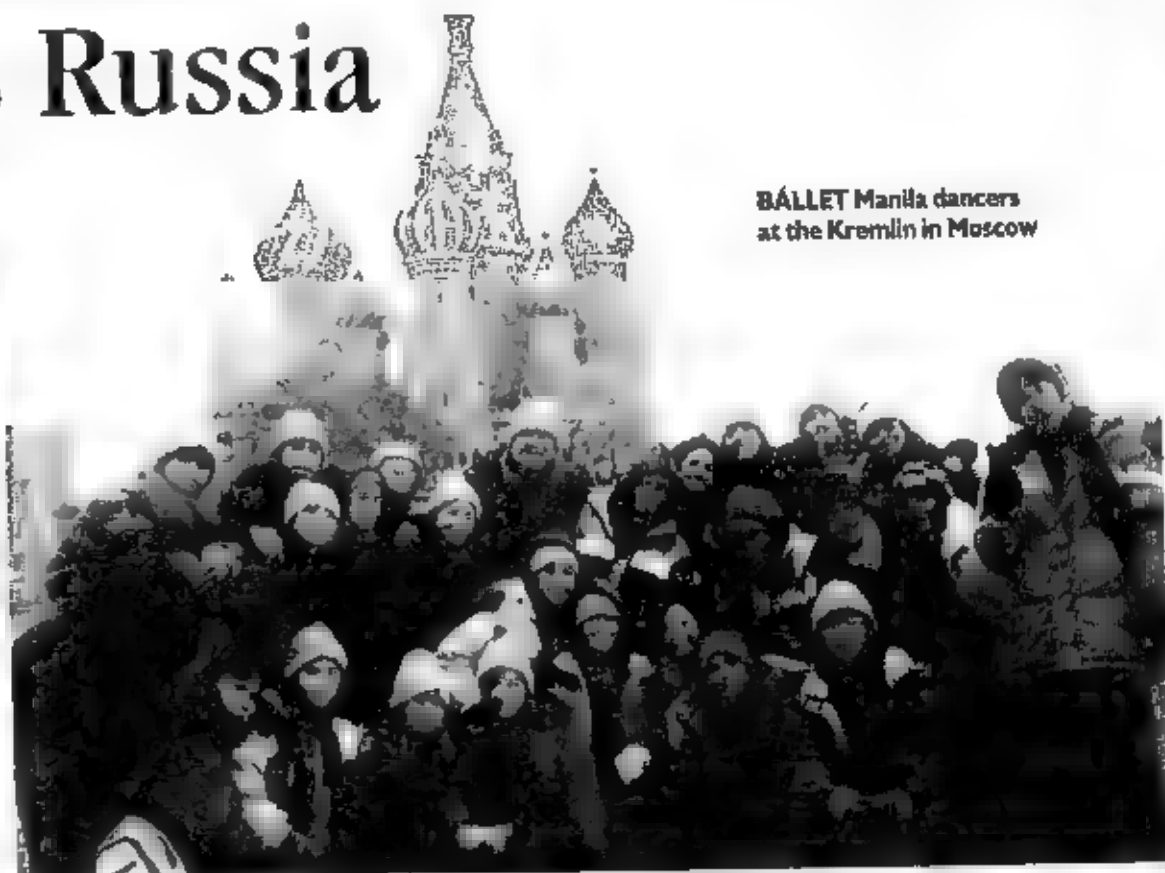
You'd think we were performing for a Filipino crowd." A number of spectators even requested to buy CDs of the program soundtrack.

It was the first time Ballet Manila ever performed the Filipino program for a completely non-Filipino audience, the cast members said. Normally, the group would reserve the Filipino program for Filipino communities overseas. This time, the concert organizers from all the seven cities made special requests for the inclusion of distinctly indigenous elements.

The other surprise of the two-day run in Russia's fifth biggest city was how well the Russian audience, basically reared on a

steady cultural diet of ballet classics since youth, reacted to the Philippine troupe's classical program, Carmen Suite. Ballet Manila presented an original choreography by the late founder and artistic adviser Eric Cruz.

In between performances, the group took a tour of the city, in particular the Cathedral of All Saints on the Blood, which was erected in July 2003 to mark the massacre of the Romanov family on the same site during the bloody Russian civil war that followed the October 1917 Revolution. That site, called the Ipatiev House, was torn down in 1977 on the order of First Party Sec. Boris Yeltsin.



BALLET Manila dancers at the Kremlin in Moscow

Yekaterinburg, founded in 1723 and named after St. Catherine and Peter the Great's wife, Ekaterina, is widely known as the city where Tsar Nicholas II, his wife Alexandra, and their children grand duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and Tsarevich Alexei were executed by Bolsheviks in July 1918. They were canonized as saints by the

Russian Orthodox Church in 2000.

Led by prima ballerina Lisa Macuja, a former regular performer for Russia's famous Kirov Ballet, later completed three performances in Perm, which boasts of one of the country's best opera and ballet theaters. Prior to Yekaterinburg, the group opened its 2005 tour in Magnitogorsk and

Chelyabinsk, booming mining and engineering cities in Chelyabinsk region.

Ballet Manila's third tour of Russia, which serves as a pre-launch event for the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Philippine-Russian relations next year, ran until Dec. 21 with performances in Kirov, Izhevsk and Tyumen.

UP features 'Hudhud' and Nob

TO MARK THE 50TH YEAR OF the restoration of diplomatic ties between the Philippines and Japan, "Hudhud and Nob: A Dialogue of Cultures," a series of forums and performances on UNESCO's "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity," will be held at the Pul-

gang Claro M. Recto, UP Faculty Center, Diliman, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Jan. 11.

Chanters from Kiangnan, Ifugao will perform the Hudhud. Masters Naohiko Umewaka and Jiro Fujita, with the UP Nob Ensemble, will perform the Nob. Call 4267573 or 9818500 loc. 2460.

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Youth rally behind culture and heritage

THE START OF THE YEAR IS the time to take stock of the heritage situation, to see where our heritage journey has reached, and to see whether it is arriving at its destination.

Not many thought of heritage conservation in the far-off 1980s when people believed that cultural heritage shackled us to a dark past. Old architecture held neighborhoods and towns from progress, they believed.

Progress demanded replacing the old with the new, building anew over the debris of the old. The cycle of destruction took away many outdated cultural practices that were rapidly abandoned and replaced with the new.

Progress and embracing new ideas are essential to the growth of a society. However, respecting the past is vital in keeping the thread of national continuity alive no matter the march of modernization.

There has been a change of attitudes since then. Conservation issues, the Jai Alai and Arrocero Forest Park demolitions, have become rallying points, making more people aware of their heritage. Now in many agendas is the preservation and revival of Philippine culture—from architecture to festivals, dances, literature, and so much more.

Student correspondence

Letters received recently from students at the University of Santo Tomas prove that the youth is moving into the front lines of conservation.

Mary Shella Senga comments on the revival of the traditional Misa de Gallo procession in the Parian of Cebu that ushered in the city's Christmas season last month.

"The Parian of Cebu is the symbol of change or modernization, but at the same time, (of) saving the culture and traditions that were once experienced by many. Kaguikan sa Parian shows that Cebuanos will always be proud of their heritage and they would always keep in their hearts and minds what they had before (while) coping with the 21st century."

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon



Quennie Chiu says that since she has become aware of conservation, she has "learned more about our culture and (she) heritage of our country."

Jomar Bautista writes that "your column opened our eyes to one of the vital reasons why we (students) should continue to strive to be architects: to reestablish and revive structures that pay homage to Philippine culture and the arts. You also made us see places we failed to recognize as part of our heritage, allowing us to think that these places are part of our culture..."

Jansen Alias writes, "You have reminded me of some of the things that we sometimes are forgetting to consider in architecture, such as environment and heritage, which directly affect us... neglecting them could be detrimental (to) designing an efficient building that would hinder the growth and lives of people in it."

He continues, "Our country is facing different types of challenges today in different fields, including architecture. Really, there is much to be done in order to make more Filipinos realize the unique pride of place in different regions of the archipelago. I believe that as Filipinos, each of us have our own duty to serve our nation that is rich in heritage and treasures. You have featured how each province boasts of a natural or architectural wonder, which is great and really something to be proud of."

"Just as you wrote in some of your articles (Carcar, Cebu), I found out that nothing is impossible if only all of us, i.e. government, citizens, church, NGOs, etc., would get our act together toward one common goal."

Everyone's duty

From Johnus Mirazol come these observations, "I have become an enthusiast of architectural conservation and preservation. I think it is good that even though we are in a period of constructing smart, grand and high-rise structures, we still give importance to the glorious past and history that we have."

Mirazol continues, "Buildings and historic places are non-living entities, but these are mirrors expressing a rich culture and history... but (they) will definitely stand in time, even for centuries, and these witnesses will tell us of the affluent culture and patrimony that was handed to us by our forefathers."

"I hope that there will come a time that architectural heritage conservation and preservation will be the duty (not only) of the few, but of all. It's not yet too late to start rebuilding what we have lost, for that is the only way that we would be able to start the foundation of our future."

Another UST Architecture student, Julius Marzan, writes that articles published on this column provide readers the "information on what's going on in different places in and out of the country," the "historical significance" of structures, and the "need for (their) conservation."

"I am also glad that the cultural importance is pointed out in your articles, which hopefully would boost the enthusiasm of Filipinos (so that they could) improve and beautify the wealth of our culture, especially in places which we can be proud of."

Marzan expresses the hope to develop the "heart for our nation and the motivation in conserving and preserving important structures and places which signify the past; (this would) help shape a better future for the Filipinos."

As the student letters show, we have come quite a way since the 1980s in the quest to preserve our heritage. With the growing involvement of the youth, rediscovering and protecting our heritage will become a national priority sooner than we expect.

E-mail the author at afv@hotmail.com

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ENTERTAINMENT/A2-1

How 'Blue Moon' was chosen MMFF Most Gender-Sensitive film

ACROSS/A13

Arrest of 46 in Cavite confirms 'jueteng' return



BUSINESS/B1

Gov't names 6 to Maynilad board of directors

WORLD/A7

Selective abortion blamed for India's 10M missing girls

Neda chief can't find 'poorest of the poor'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ALTHOUGH HALF OF FILIPINOS ARE SURVIVING on less than \$2 a day (about P105), the Arroyo administration is having a hard time finding "the poorest of the poor," especially in Metro Manila.

The National Economic and Development
NEDA/A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCE OF POWERLESS VIEWS

Senate inquiry sought on GI custody issue

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO IS seeking an inquiry to clarify the US government's position on the Philippines' request for custody of the four US Marines charged with raping a Filipino woman at the Subic Bay Freeport in November last year.

SENATE/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Tuesday, January 10, 2006

4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 33 P18

website: www.inq7.net



FRENZIED DEVOTION

A crowd estimated at half a million shows its devotion to the Black Nazarene. A man was trampled to death and dozens were hurt in yesterday's crush of people outside the Quiapo Church. (See Story on Page A16.)

Ramos gives GMA until mid-'07 to quit

Biazon says he has 5 wiretap witnesses

By TJ Burgonio

THE SHADOW OF THE "GARCIA tapes" that has hung over President Macapagal-Arroyo for more than seven months is not about to disappear.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon yesterday said he had five new witnesses "of stature" and at least two new tape recordings of phone conversations that would show "massive" wiretapping of a host of personalities before and after the May 2004 presidential election.

"New witnesses will be coming in, new pieces of evidence will be presented," Biazon told reporters, giving a preview of what could happen when the Senate committee on national defense, which he chairs, resumes its hearings on the "Hello Garci" tape controversy on Jan. 19.

"And there seems to be an indication through these new potent...

BIAZON/A6

Says he still supports President, but ...

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS YESTERDAY GAVE President Macapagal-Arroyo until June 30, 2007, to resign and decide whether she would run for parliament under an amended Constitution.

Speaking at a press conference in his office at the Export-Import Bank in Makati City, Ramos said he was willing to give the President another chance to respond to his second deadline for the sake of national unity.

Ramos had earlier given the President until Jan. 1 to make public her position on the no-election in 2007 proposal of the Consultative Commission (ConCom).

He said he was willing to accept a

one-year delay in his original timeframe for the proposed shift from a presidential to a parliamentary system because he had not considered the impeachment factor then.

Ramos admitted that his support for the President was "still waning" and reiterated his call for Ms. Arroyo to make the "ultimate sacrifice" of cutting short her term, which is to expire in 2010, in order to put in place the elements necessary for a parliamentary form of government.

"The President should resign by June 30, 2007, and declare her plans whether to continue in office by running as member of parliament. Obviously, that's a wish," he said.

Asked about his next move if this wish were not granted, Ramos said, "Abangan na lang ninyo (You just wait). Don't panic."

He continued: "Don't be scared of me. Who the hell am I? Relax lang kayo. We're doing the work here in general for the welfare of the people and for our national security."

Asked if he still supported the President at this point, Ramos said wryly, "Yes, but ..."

The "but," he said, will depend on how

RAMOS/A6



WITH HER OR NOT? "Yes, but ..." ex-President Ramos said, when asked if he still backed GMA.

Aussie firm slapped P10.7M in fines for mine spills

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT HAS slapped an Australian firm operating what had been touted as the country's flagship mining project fines of at least P10.7 million for two mine spills in the sand-municipality of Rapu-Rapu in Albay last year.

The Pollution Adjudication

Board (PAB) has ruled that Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc. (RRPI), owned by Australian Lafayette Mining Inc., violated the Clean Water Act when it discharged waste water with a high cyanide content into creeks on Oct. 11 and 31.

The toxic waste found its way to the open sea, allegedly resulting in fish kills.

The PAB fined RRPI P10.4 mil-

lion because effluents from the Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project site exceeded the acceptable cyanide level.

It was the biggest fine imposed on any violator since the Clean Water Act took effect in 2003. The P10.4-million fine was on top of the P300,000 paid by Lafayette for violating the provisions of its environmental compliance certificate.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Rod Watt, country manager of Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI), but his phone was unattended.

Rogelio Corpus, general manager for operations of LPI, refused to comment on the matter, saying the company had yet to be notified about it.

"We want revitalized mining to be the flagship of the economy,

but we are for responsible mining. If they can't do it, then we don't need them here. There are many responsible mining operators out there," Environment Secretary Michael T. Defensor said at a press conference yesterday.

Defensor, who had branded the Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project as the "make-or-break case" for the

AUSSE/A6

DOING GOOD IN BAD TIMES

'Jolliejeeps' give Jollibee run for its money

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Last of three parts)

FERDIE CASTRO USED TO TAKE most of his lunches either in the cafeteria of the building where he works or at one of the numerous fastfood outlets along Makati Avenue and Jupiter Street.

Now, he finds himself eating more and more at a "Jolliejeep"—not Jollibee—food stall behind one of Globe Telecom Inc.'s Makati City offices.

"This is also because of the difficult times," he said in Filipino, puffing on an after-meal cigarette beside his favorite jeep. "It's real-

ly a lot cheaper to eat here."

Castro's three coworkers, all dressed in their gray office-issued barong Tagalog, agreed heartily.

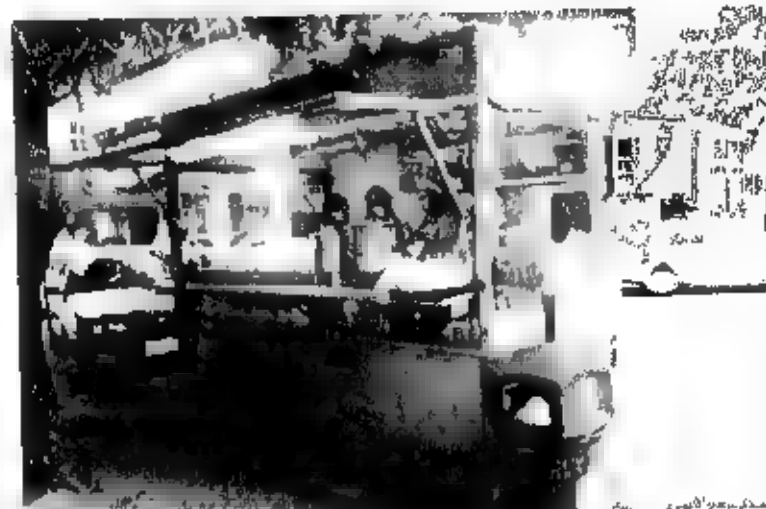
Jolliejeep (known to some as "jeepney bar") is the popular monicker of the ubiquitous aluminum stalls-cum-carinderias "parked" along many of Makati City's side

streets.

"Before, we used to eat in the cafeteria or at the fastfood," said one coworker. "But their prices are going up."

A cursory look at Jolliejeep outlets around the Central Business

JOLLIEJEPS/A4



AMBULANT RESTAURANTS. Operators of this food stall—a takeoff on the Jolliejeeps—wait for diners in Salcedo Village in Makati.

How to start a Jolliejeep business

1. ONLY REGISTERED MAKATI voters are allowed to apply, so have your original barangay residence certificate (cadula) and voter's ID or Comelec certification ready.

2. Present these documents when you fill out an application form at the Metrostores Inc. office, Unit 5-G, Electra House V.A. Rufino corner Esteban Streets, Makati. It's open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. There is no application fee.

3. Wait for Metrostores to call you about any vacancies. There are more than 100 people now on the waiting list.

4. Submit additional requirements which include business permits from the city and the barangay.

5. Discuss the terms and conditions of the Management and Service Contract with Metrostores. There's a one-time deposit of P5,000, refundable on expiration of

HOWTO/A4



Arroyos now more at home in Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM ALL APPEARANCES, President Macapagal-Arroyo's family seems to be feeling more at home in Malacañang, where her term of occupancy still has four and a half years to run.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo has started moving his office equipment and staff to the Palace to be closer to the President.

For her part, eldest granddaughter Mikaela Gloria, 3, has begun using the sprawl-

ARROYOS/A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Widespread rains may trigger flashfloods and landslides over E. Visayas and E. Mindanao. E. Luzon will have cloudy skies with rainshowers. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. COMPILED BY CYRIL ROMANERO FOR ENQUIRER. SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING

Palace drawing up list but GMA foes not going

By Michael Lim Ubat and Christine O. Avendaño

INVITED OR NOT, SOME OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE POISED TO snub the Jan. 24 Council of State meeting called by President Macapagal-Arroyo in an effort to reach out to her critics and put an end to the political crisis gripping her administration.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Bro. Eddie Villanueva of Bangon Pilipinas have said they would not be attending the meeting which administration supporters said had the "noble purpose of forging greater national unity and solidarity."

Even if he were invited, Bro. Eddie, leader of the Jesus Is Lord movement and erstwhile presidential candidate, would not want to be seen with President Arroyo, his son party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva said.

"The meeting will only be a deodorizer," the younger Villanueva of the Citizens' Battle Against Corruption (Cibac) said.

His father, he added, would welcome "unity talks" between former Presidents Corason Aquino, Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada because "we will support a coalition that will bring back justice and righteousness in the highest echelons of power."

The three former Presidents are automatic members of the Council of State. Created by Aquino in 1987, its other members include the Senate President, the Speaker, deputy speakers, the president pro-tempore of the Senate (Pimentel), the majority and minority leaders of both chambers of Congress, the executive secretary, Cabinet members and leaders of local government units' groups such as the leagues of governors, mayors and councilors.

Malacañang has reportedly invited influential religious leaders Bro. Mike Velarde of El Shaddai, Eraño Manalo of Iglesia Ni Kristo

and Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal to the meeting.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Palace was drawing up the final list of people to be invited as well as the meeting's agenda.

"So we can have a good meeting of the Council of State which rarely meets and we can find out what other sectors want and determine what programs need to be pushed," he said in Filipino.

In an interview over dzBB radio, Ermita shrugged off allegations the Palace would use the meeting for its political ends and the opposition as its "props."

"Sana ang resolusyon nating lahat ay magkansa muna tayo at isantabi muna natin ang barikusan at bigyan natin ang ating ekonomiya na pasulong ang pag-unlad at hindi tuwi-tuwina na may gagawin ang administration ay para bang mayroon tayong kapunahan (Hopefully we would resolve to unite and set aside bickering and not always criticize the administration to give our economy the chance to take off)," he said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye echoed the call, saying "this is the time for high statesmanship and patriotism."

"The people are looking up to the leaders of this nation to set aside partisanship and stand united to address the vital concerns of the day—social, economic and political," Bunye said in a statement.

Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio said the meeting's agenda would include the proposals to amend the Constitution, electoral reform and opportunities for the economic takeoff.

But claiming the council meeting would be "all for show," Deputy Minority Leader Roilo Golez yesterday said the President should instead have a "brutally frank" closed-door discussion with former Presidents Aquino and Ramos to help solve the country's problems.

"I believe the opposition should boycott [the council]. [It] is not the forum for resolving issues and the opposition would also be badly outnumbered. It would be better if [the President] meets with her equals, former Presidents FVR and Cory, in a closed-door meeting," Golez said.

"They could have a heart to heart talk, where as equals, they can openly discuss issues like the Garci tapes, the fertilizer fund scam and Hacienda Luisita in a brutally frank manner with no witnesses, just them, bound by a confidentiality agreement. That would be productive," he said.

For their part, administration Representatives Antonio Cuenco and Marcelino Libanan appealed to the opposition to "put a premium on patriotism rather than politicking" and give the council meeting a chance to succeed.

In a joint statement, Cuenco and Libanan said the opposition's plan to boycott the meeting means "they are setting aside the public welfare for their own interests."

"The opposition must realize that the council meeting is being called by President Arroyo not to woo or placate the opposition but as a consensus-building effort primarily to push the country's economic growth," said the lawmakers, urging Pimentel and Villanueva to "suspend their judgment about it and be willing enough to share their inputs on how to address the issues confronting the country."

With Philip C. Tubesa

OUTGOING DENR SECRETARY Defensor holds up his hands during a press conference at the DENR main office in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

Mike D scraps 8,000 forest mgt agreements

By Norman Bordadora

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY Michael Defensor yesterday cancelled more than 8,000 forest management agreements covering 2.2 million hectares of the country's forest reserves as many of them had become effective covers for illegal logging operations.

Defensor issued the cancellation order as he announced that he would file an indefinite leave from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to handle President Macapagal-Arroyo's schedules and projects as her de facto chief of staff.

He said he decided to cancel the forest management agreements, or logging permits, because there were too many of them and monitoring each one was difficult if not impossible.

Defensor said there would only only be three integrated forest management agreements that will continue to cover legal logging operations and all of them were in Mindanao.

"With just three active (agreements) in these areas, once you see a logging operation in, for instance, Luzon, you'd know it's illegal," Defensor said.

Defensor said that a study of the cancelled logging agreements showed violations such as failure to submit comprehensive development and management plans or pay the necessary rentals and fees.

The areas where Defensor ordered logging permits cancelled included the Ilocos region, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Western Mindanao and the Caraga region.

With respect to his replacement, Defensor said the next environment secretary should have excellent managerial skills, technical acumen and a strong will to take drastic measures to preserve the country's natural resources.

He said the officer-in-charge or the next appointee should be able to make difficult decisions such as the one he had just announced.

His reference to management and technical skills led some observers to surmise he was thinking of naming a long-time associate, DENR Undersecretary Armand de Castro, as officer-in-charge after he goes on leave.

Meanwhile, Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra called on Ms Arroyo to appoint a new environment secretary who will have the political will to protect the country's remaining forests and environment.

The people should have a say on the new choice for environment secretary, Navarra said, voicing concern over continued illegal logging activities in some areas in the country as well as the resumption of mining operations which, he said, were damaging to the environment. With Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Solon seeks out-sourcing of gov't services

By Philip C. Tubesa

TO CUT THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC RED tape and save tax-payers' money, the administration should seriously consider out-sour-

ing its non-core operations, a senior lawmaker said yesterday.

Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas said assigning non-core, back office government operations such as payroll administration services to private business process outsourcing (BPO) providers would generate billions of pesos in savings for the administration.

"Government may have to go with the trend in the private sector and deliberately contract out certain internal operating processes that may be handled more cost-effectively by specialized BPO providers," Gullas said.

Outsourcing refers to the delegation of specific non-core operations of an agency to an external entity that specializes in that operation, such as paying for the services of third-party electricians, plumbers and janitors instead of a government agency directly employing such people.

Gullas noted that of the P1.04-trillion proposed 2006 budget, nearly 32 percent or P330.5 billion would be used to pay for the salaries and benefits of around 980,000 national government employees.

Gullas pointed out that a number of federal and state agencies in the United States have

already started outsourcing non-essential functions, particularly information technology-enabled services.

Initially, he said government could start by exploring the possibility of outsourcing payroll administration services in phases.

"We reckon that in some large agencies, for them to improve their payroll administration, they may have to invest a lot of money in new IT systems. However, once the service is outsourced altogether, we can let the BPO provider worry about spending for the new technology," Gullas said.

In the US, a number of large BPO providers have specialized in payroll services, he added.

Gullas cited as examples the Automatic Data Processing Inc. and Paychex Inc., two of the largest global providers of comprehensive human resources outsourcing solutions, including payroll and benefits administration.

Studies have shown that specialized BPO contractors tend to be more cost-efficient, he said, adding that this was the reason many large US corporations have been outsourcing non-core processes, such as customer management, a service provided by call centers.

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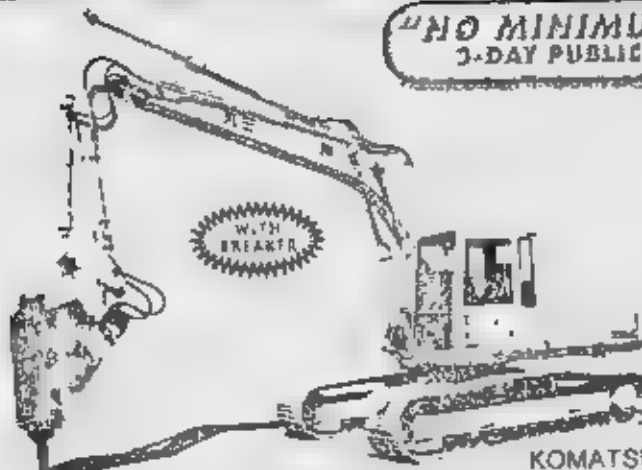
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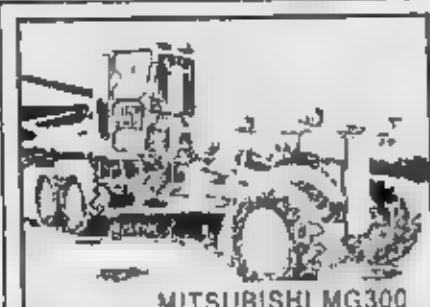
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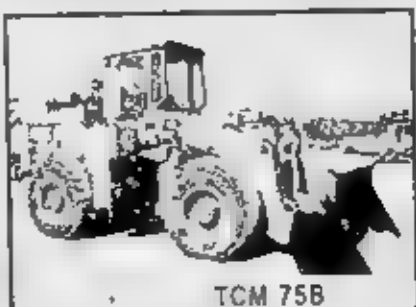
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Stolen Japanese cars seized

By Lella B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS YESTERDAY confiscated a shipment of right-hand-drive vehicles including a late model Toyota, Mazda and Honda which were misdeclared as agricultural machineries.

The confiscated vehicles, which collectively cost P13 million, were seized at the port of Manila. They were found in two container vans consigned to Gacram Trading and Pasaram Trading.

BOC Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the consignees would be charged with illegal importation and violation of Republic Act 8506 which bans the importation of right-hand drive vehicles.

Customs officials discovered the illegal shipment after a scrutiny of its import documents, which were deemed suspicious, and based on a tip from its operations and intelligence office, according to a BOC statement.

The BOC also learned that the vehicles had been declared stolen in Japan. Customs officials suspect that an international syndicate could be behind the theft of vehicles in Japan for shipment to other countries where they are re-sold.

The newly installed customs commissioner has vowed to closely monitor goods that enter the country so they could be levied with the proper taxes and duties.

The BOC was given a higher target collection of P192 billion this year up from P151 billion in 2005.

Arrest warrant for Faeldon out

By Terra V. Quismundo

A MAKATI COURT ISSUED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON a warrant for the arrest of Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, one of the junior military officers who staged a failed coup in Makati City more than two years ago.

Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 148 Judge Oscar Pimentel signed the arrest warrant against Faeldon, the court staff told the INQUIRER. He escaped from his military guards on Dec. 14 after a postponed hearing in Pimentel's sala.

Along with 31 other soldiers, Faeldon faced coup d'etat charges for taking over the plush

Oakwood apartment-hotels at the Ayala Center in Makati City on July 27, 2003.

Before guards lost him three weeks ago, Faeldon was in the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines along with his fellow "mutineers," as they also faced court-martial proceedings for the coup attempt.

The court staff said Pimentel signed the warrant at around 4 p.m. The official issuance came after the judge granted on Friday a motion the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed seeking Faeldon's arrest and the cancellation of a P100,000 cash bond he had posted on July 19, 2004.

6-IN-1 HOSPITAL

Mega gov't health care complex to rise in QC

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN TO INTEGRATE the resources and facilities of six state-run hospitals in Metro Manila into one state-of-the-art health care complex it hopes will help stem the exodus of the country's medical practitioners and bring down the cost of health care through economies of scale and synergy.

The proposed Philippine Centers for Specialized Healthcare (PCSH) will integrate the resources and services of the Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Children's Medical Center, and the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City.

It will also include a planned 1,000-bed Women's Medical Center, which will take the place of the rundown Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila, and will be built on a lot adjacent to the Kidney Institute.

The multimillion-peso project will be the first of its kind in Asia and is expected to be completed by 2010, according to Health Undersecretary Jade de Mundo.

"It will be something that we will all be proud of, something that will thrust us into the 21st century and beyond," he told the Inquirer in an interview.

Besides the hospitals, which will be expanded and their facilities upgraded, the complex will also have a National Reference Laboratory for Degenerative Diseases, and centers for blood diseases, brain, cancer and physical therapy and rehabilitation. A Medical Arts Building, large

enough to accommodate the clinics of 1,280 doctors, will also be constructed.

"Hi-tech" bridges complete with "travelators" will connect the hospitals to each other.

Already being constructed is a bridgeway connecting the Philippine Heart Center with the nearby East Avenue Medical Center. The idea is to decongest the Heart Center by transferring patients recuperating from surgery to East Avenue, Del Mundo said.

But more than the complex's physical appeal, Del Mundo said the project would translate to lower healthcare cost and better opportunities for health professionals, many of whom have left for better jobs abroad.

"This is one of the government's responses to the exodus of health professionals," he said.

The PCSH will devote 70 percent of its resources to charity cases and the remainder, to private patients, Del Mundo said.

Del Mundo said the PCSH could save 10-20 percent in the procurement of medicines as drug companies give bigger discounts for bulk orders.

He said the center could also negotiate with doctors to lower professional fees, considering the advantages available at the complex. For one, a doctor will only have to pay rent for a clinic instead of having to buy expensive shares of stock as most private hospitals require on top of charging hefty rentals.

By consolidating six government hospitals, the PCSH could also afford to lower laboratory fees, simply because of volume of patients. Likewise, the large number of patients will make acquisition of even the most expensive medical equipment economically feasible, he added.

RP nurses welcome in Hawaii

LAOAG CITY HAWAII GOV LINDA LINGLE said the island state would open its doors to more Filipino nurses due to a shortage of health care workers.

Lingle flew to Ilocos Norte on Friday night to start her weeklong caravan in the Ilocos region for the centennial of Filipino migration to Hawaii.

In a briefing at the Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino on Friday, Lingle said the state of Hawaii and the province of Ilocos Norte had signed an exchange program between their institutions: the University of Hawaii and the Mariano Marcos State University — in health care and agriculture.

The agreement is part of the sisterhood re-

lationship between Hawaii and Ilocos Norte that Lingle and Gov Ferdinand Marcos Jr. forged in February last year.

"Our state has a shortage [of nurses] and we have many Filipinos who come to our state and attempt to pass the state nursing exam," Lingle said.

She said American professors would train their counterparts in Ilocos to give local nurses a better chance to pass the state nursing exams.

The state of Hawaii also signed similar agreements with the University of Northern Philippines and Virgen Milagrosa University, both in Ilocos Sur. Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



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No more asking husband "do I look fat?"

"Do I look fat?" is something she won't have to ask her husband again. Lyn Chung-Pascual is enthused with how Marie France shaped her body from a huge American size 10 to a sexy size 4 in just two months. Twelve pounds lighter, she can now dress any way she wants. She can show off her body in fitted clothes without feeling self-conscious of excess bulges. "Slimming down has definitely changed my life. It's so much easier now to move around and I'm more confident when dressing up. I don't have to wear black all the time. I can dress in white or any other color because I know I look good," says a proud Lyn.

"People compliment me every single day. My friends congratulate me because for the first time in my life I have become sexy!" For Lyn, who has been fat all her life, compliments

are certainly music to her ears. "I was an obese child. I weighed 140 lbs when I was only 10 years old. It was so bad it got to a point that my skin gave up on me. I had stretch marks on my legs — at 10 years old! Imagine that."

When she got older, Lyn went through different weight-loss methods. "Yo-yo dieting — gym (I'd workout religiously for months, then stop)... badminton (I'd play everyday, lose weight, then stop) — it got to a point when I was on the verge of an eating disorder. I looked really, really sick. dry skin... I wasn't moving too much because I was always tired... I couldn't breathe well. I had a lot of problems at that time. Plus, I really love food. That's why it's so hard for me to go on a diet. Surgical options? Honestly, I would choose to have surgery only if my

life depended on it. Because I know something can still be done to get the body I want without resorting to drastic measures. Also every time you go under the knife, there's always a possibility something might go wrong. I'm not willing to take that chance."

That's why she couldn't have been happier when she enrolled at Marie France. She lost a lot of weight without having to resort to invasive procedures or crash diets. "I'm very happy because I can still eat whatever I want. I have a sweet tooth so I eat 2 bags of caramels, popcorn everyday — and I never miss a day." Now, everybody's asking how she did it. With a smile, she unabashedly utters the words "Marie France."

She adds, "Their treatments are very easy, very fast, very safe, and very convenient for me. After the show (Linaang Hirin) which ends at around 8:30-8:45am, I go straight to Marie France. They open early so there's no problem regarding schedule. It's very convenient because whatever I wear when I arrive, I can also wear when I leave. I don't have to take a bath or time to rest after a heavy workout. At Marie France, you just lie down and everyone else does the work for you. I can sleep and rest while losing weight. Where can you get that kind of deal?"

"People from the audience... the show they tell me that I look good... really good. Even a close friend of mine said, I have never seen you this thin before. That's because before, when I used to workout a lot, I lost weight but I looked bulky. I lost pounds but not inches. With Marie France, I lose both pounds AND inches," Lyn stressed.

To women who want to finally get rid of those excess pounds this new year, Lyn has this to say, "Don't do anything else, just Marie France. You will lose weight while sleeping. Do something for yourself. Go to Marie France because your weight-loss is going to last and it will make you happy for sure. It made me happy."

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Since Lyn lost over 12 pounds and a total of more than 12.5 inches at Marie France, she confesses to flaunting her new slim and sexy shape at almost every opportunity. "I know it's a bit naughty," she says, "but I just can't help it. I'm so proud of the way I look now. I'm aware of the 'double takes' at the studio, while shopping, and at corporate shows — it's really great, thanks to Marie France!"

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Senate inquiry sought on GI custody issue

From page A1

The senator filed yesterday a resolution directing the committee on foreign relations, which she chairs, to look into the issue of custody following the US military's decision to turn over to Japanese authorities an American serviceman accused of killing and robbing a Japanese woman in Japan.

Santiago noted that the four accused in the rape case had filed motions seeking judicial determination of probable cause "or a stay of arrest," thus delaying the local courts' issuance of warrants for their arrest.

In contrast, the US military had agreed to hand over the 21-year-old sailor charged with killing the Japanese woman to the Japanese authorities early this month, she said.

No legal basis

"There appears to be no appreciable legal basis for the difference in treatment by the US military authorities over the Americans accused in the two countries," the senator said in her resolution.

olution.

Santiago said the Visiting Forces Agreement called for US custody of American personnel accused of crimes "until completion of all judicial proceedings," while Japan's Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa) gave the US custody of their personnel "until the accused is charged."

"Ostensibly, there is a difference because while the VFA provides for US custody until the judicial process is finished, the Sofa provides for US custody only until the accused is charged in court," she said.

"The seeming difference between the provisions on custody of the VFA (Philippines) and Sofa (Japan) is negated by the provision in the VFA that even if the US is entitled to custody, in extraordinary cases, the US, if requested, shall take into full account the request for Philippine custody," she added.

General rule on treaties

The senator further pointed out that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties provided that a treaty should be interpreted

ed in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning of the terms of the treaty as well as its purpose.

"Under this general rule on interpretation, the VFA 'extraordinary case' exception should be interpreted in good faith by the Americans in the context of respect for and observance of Philippine legal procedures and in the light of the purpose to treat the Philippines as an ally, equal with other American allies," she said.

In particular, the inquiry would determine whether the US had a "diplomatic obligation to interpret the VFA 'extraordinary case' exception so as to equal to the Sofa provision that US custody is allowed only until the accused American is charged in court," the senator said.

RP can't react hastily

If the inquiry "should prove to be fruitless," the same committee should then inquire "whether it is necessary to request a renegotiation of the VFA, to the end that the Philippine custody provision should

be amended so as to approximate the Japanese custody provision," she said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon urged the government not to rush to gain custody of the four accused without carefully studying the implications.

"We have our processes in this country. We can't just react hastily without studying all of these. Because there are serious implications on the credibility of our justice system, on the credibility of our government in maintaining its sovereignty and in abiding by the provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement," he said in a briefing.

The difference between the VFA and the Sofa should be studied, he added.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the country was stuck with the VFA and the procedures outlined there in handling the criminal case against the four servicemen.

"Let us go through the process, we are not a rogue state that we do not know how to comply with our obligations," he said, reacting to continuing calls

for the government to move aggressively to take custody of the US servicemen.

He said it was enough that the Department of Foreign Affairs had already asked the US government to turn over custody of the accused Americans to the country and it was set to reiterate the request.

Compliance in good faith

"Under international law, when you enter into a treaty, you are supposed to comply in good faith and implement it in good faith unless the situation suddenly changes that you cannot anymore implement it. Then you can ask to either abrogate or renegotiate it," he said in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

Gonzalez said Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Richard Gordon—who pressed for the country to take custody of the American soldiers in view of the Japan experience—could only be voicing "emotional sentiments."

"But I cannot be guided by emotional sentiments, I have to

follow what the law says... You know they were the ones who ratified this," he said of the Senate.

Aside from the contentious issues of custody and jurisdiction, the judge trying the case expects another snag to crop up—where to jail the accused.

Judge Renato Dela told the INQUIRER in a phone interview on Monday the court could not unilaterally decide on a place of detention.

Diag said Paragraph 10, Article 5 of the Visiting Forces Agreement stated that "both parties may agree on the place where the accused may be detained."

In Diag's interpretation, that provision meant that the prison facility must be approved by the Philippine and the US governments.

"So even if I issue the arrest warrants when I find probable cause to do that, I cannot immediately send them off to a local jail of my court's choice," he said.

With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Volt Contreras and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Neda chief can't find 'poorest of the poor'

From page A1

Authority (Neda) said finding the truly penniless Filipinos would help the government ensure that beneficiaries of its program to dole out free instant noodles and rice were really the "poorest of the poor" and not just pretenders.

"Anybody can make data to prove they are the poorest of the poor. The very poor are mobile people. They move from place to place and the government wants to make sure that they are truly who they are before it gives them directly food to eat," Neda Director General Augusto Santos said in a phone interview.

Except for the obvious places such as the Smokey Mountain and Payatas dumps, grinding poverty is not easy to pinpoint, according to Santos.

"All modern cities in the world have pockets of poverty within them and that's not easy to locate. Even in rural areas, it's hard to say if a family is going hungry just by looking at their house," said Santos, also the socioeconomic planning secretary.

In gathering data on the poorest of the poor, Santos said Neda was getting inputs from the National Anti-Poverty Commission to ensure that its list of indigents was "credible and has integrity." The government has stepped

up its antipoverty program, including setting aside part of the P35-billion pump-priming program in the first quarter for subsidizing instant noodles and rice.

Santos did not say if the distribution of free noodles and rice to the poorest of the poor was part of the subsidized noodles and rice program. The subsidized noodles and rice will be coursed through barangay chairs in poor communities.

More getting hungry

A growing number of Filipinos are going hungry despite an expanding economy.

Close to one of every five Filipino households is hungry for at least one day, while more than half rank themselves as poor.

A survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS) in the fourth quarter of last year found that a record 16.7 percent of Filipino families went hungry at least one day in the previous three months (excluding religious fasting).

SWS placed the number of families that went hungry at 2.8 million, equivalent to 14 million people. The average household in the country has five members.

Santos played down the results of the survey mainly because the

poll was a self-rated exercise in which the respondents gave their take on their economic status.

In contrast, the National Statistics Office bases a person's poverty on hard facts such as nutrition levels, according to the Neda chief.

Santos said it was human nature to exaggerate one's situation. "If you ask one guy if he is poor or hungry, he'd say yes because he wants more money or he wants more to eat."

Papal nuncio

At the vin d'honneur last night in Malacañang, Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to properly address poverty.

"Looking at the future with the experience of the past, we all wish you to give better answers to the needs and expectations of the people and to contribute to eradicate the causes of poverty and social tensions," Franco said in his speech.

Ms Arroyo acknowledged that the people were getting "impatient" over the lack of improvement in their lives.

She said she was making it a priority to make sure that the benefits of a strong peso, stock market and bonds would trickle down to the poor.

"We recognize that the benefits

apparent at the top of the economic pyramid are not being felt by the very people who need it most. I have asked my Cabinet to allocate P35 billion immediately to bring near-term improvement to the lives of the people," the President said.

Ms Arroyo said the second phase of her economic reforms was meant to bring the benefits of macroeconomic improvements to the people. "For the first time in years, we have resources to sustain our investment in the people and not just feed the beast of debt service," she said.

An administration that fails to address hunger has no reason to remain in power, said Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran.

Wage increase

Alarmed over the results of the SWS survey, Beltran pressed anew for the passage of House Bill No. 345 calling for a P125 across-the-board wage increase.

In a statement, Beltran said one way of addressing the growing number of Filipinos going hungry was to implement a nationwide wage increase.

He said a wage increase was the first step toward strengthening the purchasing capacity of the working poor at a time of high

prices of goods and services. The rising cost of living has been largely due to high fuel prices and power rates and the implementation of the 10 percent expanded value-added tax (VAT). The VAT rate will be raised to 12 percent in February.

Beltran, a former labor leader, noted that half a decade had passed since labor groups first pressed for a legislated nationwide wage increase.

"Back in 1999, P460 was the average daily cost of living. It rose to at least P667 as of September last year. Yet no substantial wage increase has been granted to ensure that wages keep up with expenditures," he noted.

Beltran said the need for a wage hike had become more urgent because of the Arroyo administration's "quadruple whammies" against the working class last year—more taxes, more price increases, more rate hikes and more holiday declarations.

"The reality is that more children are subsisting on pagpag (recycled and discarded food), and more workers are waging strikes because of oppressively low wages, as the Hacienda Luisita strike shows," he said. With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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'Jolliejeeps' give Jollibee ...

From page A1

District reveals a business that is not only doing well, but is booming.

According to Ledenila Camilion, her Jolliejeep operation behind the Pacific Star building at the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat and Makati avenues generates up to P9,000 worth of sales on any given day from P2,000 worth of market expenses.

"On good days, we sell a lot of food, especially during lunch and merienda," she said.

Bad days?

And how much does she gross on "bad days?"

"Sometimes, when business is slow, it can go as low as P7,000 per day," she said.

Her smile and the steady stream of office employees lining up to have lunch way past 1 p.m. suggest that those bad days come few and far between.

Camilion has been manning her Jolliejeep at her present location for over two years now. She said she had nothing to complain about, especially since she operates one of only two food stalls behind the Pacific Star and Petron MegaPlaza office towers and the former head office of Far East Bank.

Creek comes with the meal

That her stall sits beside a polluted creek doesn't seem to bother her customers, who are happy enough to have a set meal of one cup of rice, one viand and one bottle of softdrinks for only P50.

Diners who can't stand the noonday heat would take out their lunches in styrofoam and plastic containers and eat them back in their airconditioned of-

fices, she said.

"Around the corner, you'll have to pay at least P100 per meal," Camilion said, pouring her lips at the branch of a popular Chinese fastfood chain.

So successful have Jolliejeeps become that mainstream fastfood outlets, like Jollibee, are worried about the slow but steady migration of diners to competitors some people once dismissed as purveyors of "hepa food."

The label sprang from rumors that the allegedly unsanitary practices of some Jolliejeep operators had caused several diners to be infected with hepatitis A.

Managers and crew members of a nearby Jollibee admitted privately that they were worried not about rival fastfood outlets, but about the drawing power of the Jolliejeeps, which seems to increase in the face of economic hardship.

Exclusive franchise

"Sales remain strong, but our lines are slightly shorter," said one supervisor.

Since the volume of diners at nearby fastfood restaurants remains unchanged, he believes that former patrons must be shifting toward cheaper dining alternatives.

The success of the Jolliejeep has not escaped the attention of local government regulators.

From an unregulated industry requiring operators to pay only daily parking fees has risen a company called Metrostores Inc. that holds the exclusive franchise for the food stalls.

"Jolliejeep" is now the official name of the business, and annual fees are now paid by franchisees for registration, licensing and sanitary permits.

Recently, the Makati government even increased from P300 to P360 its charge for the annual mayor's permit for these food stalls, which are classified as "carinderia" operations under the city's business code.

The fees don't seem to deter Jolliejeep operators or those aspiring to get into the business, says Pablo Glean, officer in charge of the city's Business Permits Office.

"There are many applicants who come to us every day, and I understand the waiting list with Metrostores is very long," he told the INQUIRER.

Despite this, diners are not about to experience a sudden tidal wave of Jolliejeep stalls sweeping across Makati.

Power of 'mosquitoes'

"There are 124 Jolliejeep stalls around Makati," Glean said. "That's a constant number."

He said the ceiling on the number of operators was set by the city government and by the Ayala-owned firm that administers the Central Business District, in consultation with Metrostores, so as not to kill other food establishments in the area.

"There's an agreement between them so that the bigger restaurants will not die," Glean said.

The remark was not without some irony. After all, nobody could have imagined that what was once a "mosquito business" could pose a threat to anyone, especially the more established fastfood stores.

Ferdie doesn't mind

The limited slots means operators are holding on tightly to their Jolliejeep franchises. Only few opt not to renew their licenses each year.

"There are some who leave the

How to start a Jolliejeep business

From page A1

contract

Metrostores will also collect P500 daily from each Jolliejeep—P350 in management and service fee and P150 in parking fee. Jolliejeep operators are expected to comply with the city's cleanliness and sanitation standards, and pay the required taxes yearly.

6. Metrostores will then endorse you to the city's social welfare department, which takes care of the interests of food vendors who used to sell food in vehicles they would park anywhere in the commercial business district until they were displaced by the Jolliejeeps.

After this, you can start operating the Jolliejeep assigned to you.

(For inquiries, call Metrostores Inc. at 812-0803 or 892-0731) Jamie Alarcan and Chona Galang, PDI Research

business, but it's very rare, and there are many waiting in line who will gladly take their place," Glean said, noting that it was difficult to find a business that raked in P9,000 at the end of the day on morning capital of only P2,000.

Office workers, like Ferdie Castro, don't mind if people, like Ledenila Camilion, make a killing day in and day out, as long as they get good value for their money.

Not even the thought of contracting "hepa" scares Ferdie and his friends—as long as, they say, the meal is "delicious and cheap."

Standing within earshot, Camilion breaks into a grin while serving merienda to a long line of people clad in barong.

Pilots who want out complain of harassment

By Nikko Dizon

A NUMBER OF PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE (PAF) pilots want out but the military hierarchy has been allegedly sitting on their resignation letters.

"It's harassment, plain and simple," one of the pilots told the Inquirer in an interview late last week. "They are making us rot here."

The pilot requested anonymity, citing his pending resignation from the Air Force.

The pilot said that PAF Commanding General (CG), Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, had returned some of the resignation letters last year for "unexplained reasons."

Sought for comment, Reyes denied that he rejected the resignations of some of the pilots.

He said some resignations were returned because they lacked documents.

"Nevertheless, I ordered some of the resignation letters processed even if they lacked some documents. We'll just attach them later on," Reyes said.

The pilot also said that Reyes issued "a verbal instruction" that the pilots could not apply for terminal leave.

"The reason cited was because pilots usually go on terminal leave to find employment outside the military or train as commercial airline pilots," he said.

He added that at least two pilots had gone AWOL because of this directive.

In a subsequent interview yesterday, the pilot told the Inquirer that curiously, the Air Force leadership started attending to the resignation letters.

The pilot said he had submitted his resignation letter middle of last year.

According to Maj. Augusto de la Peña, incoming spokesperson of the Air Force, there were 24 Air Force pilots who filed their resignation last year.

Disgruntled PAF colonel wants Senate custody

By Alcuin Papa

DISGRUNTLED AIR FORCE COL. Efren Daquil has asked to be placed in the custody of the Senate a day after he found a tiny camera hidden in the air-conditioner of his Villamor Air Base quarters, his lawyer said yesterday.

Daquil made the request in a letter to Brig. Gen. Francisco Vila Jr., Villamor camp commander,

lawyer Homobono Adaza said.

"He wants to be transferred to the custody of Senator (Rodolfo) Biazon. He is willing to tell all," Adaza said in a phone interview.

Biazon chairs the Senate national defense and security committee and is a former Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff.

In a press conference last week, Daquil had asked the leadership of the Air Force to explain how P30

million in savings in its personnel office was spent. He also questioned the monthly allowances of P45,000 each for wing commanders and 8,500 each for their deputies on top of their salaries.

Adaza said Daquil had deplored the bugging of his room as an invasion of privacy. He, however, had yet to make a formal request to Biazon regarding custody, Adaza said.

AFP Public Information Office chief Col. Tristan Kison, in a briefing with reporters, said the military should have custody of Daquil. "Primary jurisdiction (over Daquil) belongs to the Air Force," he said.

The Air Force defended the spying, saying it was necessary for intelligence-gathering.

The Air Force leadership also explained that the P30 million was spent on sports gear for personnel and the

allowances were part of the Direct Support Fund which is used for the upkeep of commanders' offices.

Adaza said that on the request of PAF commanding general Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, Daquil had agreed to a mutual "moratorium" on interviews with the press until the Air Force Provost Marshal shall have finished his investigation of probable violations of the Articles of War by Daquil.

Coast Guard races to stop oil spill off Semirara

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD is racing to control a spill of over 162,000 liters of oil that seeped out of a National Power Corp. barge that ran aground along with a Napocor tanker in Semirara, Antique, on Dec. 19 last year.

With some 2,480 sacks of oil-contaminated debris already collected in a three-week period, PCG commandant Vice Admiral Arthur Gosingan directed Coast Guard personnel to intensify the cleanup operations.

He also instructed local PCG officials to hold daily assessment meetings and closely monitor the cleanup process to ensure that there would be no delays. Coast Guard spokesperson Commander Joseph Coyne said

"We want to keep a close watch on the cleanup of the oil spill and to speed it up because we are very concerned about its effects on the environment. Residents of the surrounding communities are very worried over the situation," Coyne said in an interview.

The Coast Guard is also in charge of protecting the marine environment.

The cleanup of approximately 162,160 liters of oil is expected to take four months, although Coyne said the PCG was aiming to shorten that time.


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Ramos gives GMA until mid-2007 to quit

'She can be Joan of Arc without being burned'

By Cynthia Balana
and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

HE IS DESCRIBED AS A PSY-WAR expert and yesterday he demonstrated why.

Reading from previous published interviews of himself both here and abroad in a wide-ranging news conference, former President Fidel V. Ramos made clear where he stood in the continuing political crisis hounding President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"My support for President Arroyo is incidental," he quoted one report. "She has to do something noble—cut short her term."

Quoting from a Time magazine article on the need for a new political system in the Philippines, Ramos said, "The higher the position, the greater the sacrifice. It's her head on the line."

Filipino Joan of Arc?

He also mentioned a previous statement he made on the need to update the 1987 Constitution to meet the needs of the times: "President Arroyo can be the Joan of Arc of the Philippines without being burned at the stake."

To laughter from reporters, Ramos said, "You think it is funny. No, it is not. It is very serious."

The 77-year-old Ramos then repeated a "timeline" for political change he had been hammering on Amendments to the Constitution and a plebiscite but adding a new element—elec-

tions by June 2007.

Last night, Ramos joined the traditional diplomatic gathering at the Palace—the vin d'honneur—hosted by Ms Arroyo.

He stood side by side with the President on stage as she offered a toast to the diplomatic community.

For the first time, Ramos spoke in detail about his meeting in his office with Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III, who is allied with ousted President Joseph Estrada, last month.

He said he was asked during the meeting, held upon the request of Drilon and Sotto, if he was willing to join a covenant with Aquino and Estrada.

No unity with Erap

"I said I suppose that covenant is to unseat the incumbent. Although I did not get an answer to that, I said, 'Look, I will not be part of a covenant with Estrada unless there is a closure to the case pending against him in the Sandigan because I would end up influencing the court.'"

"Secondly, I already had my own formula for constitutional change with a timeline for the renewal of our total condition, not just leadership, but economic, credit rating, peace and order and power restoration."

Drilon broke away from Ms Arroyo amid mounting calls for the President's resignation. This followed revelations in the "Hello Garci" wiretaps which allegedly indicated Ms Arroyo stole the May 2004 presidential



PRESIDENT Arroyo and former President Fidel V. Ramos toast the new year during the vin d'honneur in Malacañang. EDWIN MACAPAGS

election.

Ramos was largely credited with having salvaged the tottering Arroyo presidency at that time. Last month, he described as a "monumental blunder" a recommendation by Ms Arroyo's handpicked Constitutional Commission to do away with elections in 2007 to pave the way for the institution of a parliamentary system and elections in 2010.

No parliamentary post

The former Armed Forces chief of staff said he had no intention of serving as president or prime minister in the proposed parliamentary system.

"I had it under one hat—both as head of state and head of government. There will be a demotion for me if I accept one or the other," Ramos, a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point, said during the nationally

televised news conference.

"The point is young leaders must emerge. This is a country of 85 million Filipinos," he said. "It is time for the young to pick up the mantle of responsibility from the elders."

He pointed to the example of Germany, which recently elected a 51-year-old leader.

He said he had meetings with various opposition leaders but had to turn down some requests for meetings by others because he had to spend time with his family. He showed a photograph during a tattooing session with family members on Dec. 29. The picture showed him in an undershirt with a tiger tattoo on his right bicep.

Speaker Jose de Venecia called Ramos a "master practitioner of psywar" and said the opposition must not be deceived into believing they had "captured him."

From page A1

the President would respond to his second deadline.

"I'm not playing coy here. Malay ninyo naman (For all you know), I'm giving the President a chance. Abangan na lang ninyo (Just wait for it). You don't build public opinion in one day," he said, adding that his support for any President was always incidental to national interest.

Former President Joseph Estrada said in a statement that Ramos' timeline for Ms Arroyo to resign in June 2007 was too long.

"The people have suffered much in the last five years as shown in recent surveys and for them to wait for 2007 is too much," he said, warning that this could lead to a breakdown in peace and order.

"As I have said repeatedly before, a hungry stomach knows no law," said Estrada, who was ousted by a "people power" uprising in 2000 and replaced by then Vice President Macapaga. Arroyo

Ramos acknowledged that the President might not be taking his advice kindly.

"This is human nature. And I cannot control all the elements that go into her decision-making," he said.

When reminded that he had been harsh on the President by giving her deadlines Ramos insisted that he only did so twice.

First deadline not ignored

Contrary to the public perception that his first deadline was ignored, Ramos said the President had told him that she already had referred the ConCom report on the proposed amendments to the Constitution to Congress and would rather have the people decide on it.

He also said the President's decision to convene the Council of State and the national directorate of the Lakas-NUCD party this month was a "sign" of a "definite

reaction" from her.

He said he would ask the party during its forthcoming convention to come up with a position on whether to accept or reject the proposal for no elections in 2007.

On the need to cut short the President's term, Ramos said this would allow Congress to act swiftly on the proposal to amend the Constitution, embark on an information campaign and hold a referendum.

Ramos warned the President against a possible revolt by the masses because of what he considered the widening gap between the poor and the rich.

He reminded the media that he had been sticking his neck out since he was a young soldier and that he wanted young leaders to do the same.

Ramos said during President Corason Aquino's administration, "I struck my neck out and I supported her nine times and I'm talking about coup attempts. That was a shoot-to-kill situation. Who would want to go into that all over again?"

Ramos ruled out a possible military solution to the political crisis, saying it would be unfair to drag soldiers and policemen into the political controversy.

Ramos also said the President should not gloat about positive economic indicators like the GDP (gross domestic product) but should confront the issue of poverty right away as this bred communist rebels or suicide bombers.

On the Council of State, to be presided over by Ms Arroyo, Ramos said he hoped the meeting, which would include himself and Aquino, would yield positive results. (See related story on Page A2.)

He said he expected the Arroyo administration to be saddled with the issues of political instability, a second impeachment complaint against the President in July and the worsening poverty of the people. With a report from Nelson R. Florio

Biazon says he has 5 wiretap witnesses, 2 new tape recordings

From page A1

tial testimonies and additional pieces of evidence that it was a massive operation of wiretapping in relation to the conduct of elections of 2004," he said.

Only I ready to talk

However, only one of the five witnesses has so far confirmed his attendance at next week's hearing, Biazon said, adding that he was still trying to convince the others to come forward.

He said three of the witnesses were "significant" while the other two could corroborate their testimonies.

The senator said the testimonies of the new witnesses and the new tapes would indicate that the eavesdropping operations were not confined to the wiretapping of phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and former

Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcilano.

EO 464 can't touch them

He refused to identify the new witnesses lest they become targets of threats to prevent them from appearing before the Senate.

"They will be identified on the day of the hearing. They're free to move (around)," he said.

The witnesses also are not covered by the controversial Executive Order No. 464, which bars people in the administration, including the Armed Forces and the police, from testifying in Congress without Ms Arroyo's consent, the senator said.

This would suggest that the new witnesses were not government people or at least were no longer in government, if they ever were.

"These three can't be bribed," the senator said. "Their arms can't be twisted because they have their own stature in the first place."

Tapes are 'authentic'

"I don't think these people can be influenced by anyone, including the Senate committee," he added.

Biazon said he actually had three tapes but two of these were identical and he had listened to them and found them to be "authentic."

"These are in addition to the mother of all tapes," he said, referring to the Garci tapes on which Ms Arroyo and Garcilano were heard talking about alleged ways to tamper with the results of the 2004 elections.

The release of the tapes in June last year plunged the Arroyo presidency into its worst political crisis, triggering an impeachment

complaint which the President's backers in Congress quashed.

Several voices

"I had finally examined them, and I think they're authentic enough to be presented and be acceptable in the conduct of the hearings," Biazon said of the new tapes.

He did not say how he got hold of them.

The tapes run from 15 to 25 minutes and cover conversations of different individuals from January to June 2004, according to Biazon.

"(There were) several conversations, different voices, different dates, and there is an annotator," he said.

Biazon also declined to identify the individuals wiretapped, but said that the tapes could be traced to "somebody" from the Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

"I'm not yet ready to give you hints as to who they are," he said.

Traceable to Isafp

The Isafp had been tagged as the agency that had wiretapped Garcilano, but the military leadership has consistently denied this.

"I already have in my hands communication which is telling me who the source of the three tapes are. I'm not saying Isafp. I'm saying that it's traceable to somebody

from Isafp," Biazon said.

An Inquirer special report in September mentioned sophisticated Isafp bugging equipment from the United States, purportedly to be used to track down suspected terrorists.

The equipment included a handy computer no bigger than an attaché case which could intercept phone conversations and record the voices of pre-programmed targets.

Arroyos now more . . .

From page A1

ing Palace grounds for horseback riding lessons on a P15,000 pony.

Mike Arroyo will move into the office formerly occupied by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye on the second floor of the main Palace building.

The office used to be the bedroom of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Bunye confirmed that he and the First Gentleman would swap offices as part of Ms Arroyo's plan to consolidate the Malacañang communication group on the third floor of the New Executive Building (NEB) outside the main Palace compound.

Change of heart

Mike Arroyo started moving out his office equipment from the NEB building yesterday.

Bunye's transfer was supposed to coincide with the transfer of the Press Office to the NEB, but Ms Arroyo had a change of heart about banishing the reporters from their current perch in the Malacañan Hall building.

Ms Arroyo found out for herself how difficult and tiring it would be for media people to have to walk from the NEB to the main Palace compound for their daily news coverage.

Bunye said the First Gentleman wanted to be closer to his

wife and grandchildren.

Mike Arroyo gifted Mikaela with a pony for Christmas after his eldest apo took to horseback riding during the family's Christmas vacation in Baguio City.

Mikaela was seen having a grand time riding the horse—bought in Batangas—in the Palace's yard for 45 minutes yesterday, with a yaya and two male assistants.

Apparently, Mikaela has taken an interest in the hobby of her daddy, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, who is a horse breeder.

Only yesterday

Mike Arroyo's roosting at the Palace comes just six months after Ms Arroyo announced that her husband would go abroad to take some of the heat off her administration.

At that time, Mike Arroyo, his eldest son and brother were being linked to huge "jueteng" pay-offs—allegations they denied—while Ms Arroyo herself, hounded by accusations that she had cheated in the 2004 elections, was struggling to keep her job.

The voluntary "self-exile" turned out to be a short one, with the First Gentleman flitting back and forth to the Philippines during that period.

Aussie firm slapped P10.7M in fines

From page A1

Philippines' revitalized mining industry, said the maximum fine imposed on Lafayette was meant to prevent similar occurrences at other mining projects.

"(It) is well within the capability of the respondent (RRPI) to prevent (mine spills) should it only exercise prudence in the conduct of its business affairs," he said.

The project is said to be worth P10.4 billion.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources also upheld the suspension of Lafayette's gold mining operation.

Conditions

Lafayette will be allowed to resume operations only after it had met the following conditions:

- An approved environmental management system or ISO 14001 certification.

- A comprehensive pollution control program including plans and specifications of the anti-pollution facility.

- Budget and chart of the activities.

- A surety bond of 25 percent of the total cost of the pollution control program.

- A detailed description of the interim remedial measures to mitigate pollution pending the completion of the pollution control program.

- Employment of a pollution control officer duly accredited by the DENR.

- A notarized undertaking from the company showing proof of compliance with all the conditions.

Lafayette was also required to rehabilitate its settling, polishing and event ponds to ensure that they could hold mine wastes and effluents from the project before resuming operations.

"No temporary lifting order shall be considered until the company has fulfilled all the requirements," Defensor said.

Gold milling stopped

Lafayette was ordered to stop gold milling operations on Nov. 14 after a defective valve and heavy rains forced the company to discharge waste water into the creeks last October.

Loubeth Medrano, director of the Environmental Management Bureau, said the P10.4-million fine was the accumulated maximum penalty of P200,000 a day for companies that violate the Clean Water Act.

The amount represented the fines from Oct. 11, the first mine spill, to Dec. 14, the latest sampling date before the PAB issued its decision against RRPI.



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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Selective abortion blamed for India's 10M missing girls

LONDON—ABOUT 10 MILLION FEMALE FETUSES may have been aborted in India over the past two decades, according to research published on Monday.

A team of scientists who analyzed female fertility figures from a national survey of 6 million people in India found that there were about half a million fewer girls born in the country in 1997 than expected.

Extrapolated over 20 years, the figure would be 10 million, the researchers said in a report published online by The Lancet medical journal.

They added that selective abortion of female fetuses is the most plausible explanation for the skewed sex ratio.

"We conservatively estimate that prenatal sex determination and selective abortion account for 0.5 million missing girls year-

ly," said Dr. Prabhat Jha, of the University of Toronto in Canada, who headed the research team.

"If this practice has been common for most of the past two decades since access to ultrasound became widespread, then a figure of 10 million missing female births would not be unreasonable," he added in a statement.

The findings support estimates by the Indian Medical Association which has said that five million female fetuses are killed in India each year.

Jha and his team found that the sex of the previous child was a determining factor in whether a

female fetus was aborted.

Fewer females are born as second and third children if the first child in a family is a girl.

The researchers said lack of girls as a second or third child is more pronounced in educated, rather than illiterate, women.

"To have a daughter is socially and emotionally accepted if there is a son, but a daughter's arrival is often unwelcome if the couple already have a daughter," Prof. Shirish Sheth, of the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai, India, said in a commentary on the report.

Fetal sex determination and medical termination of pregnancy based on the sex of the fetus have been illegal since 1994, but Sheth said there is published evidence of rampant female feticide in India where daughters are regarded as a liability. **Reuters**



JUMP START

Three dogs jump rope with a trainer for the dog circus at a Tokyo shopping mall as an event of the Year of the Dog Jan. 9. The trick dogs attract shoppers for Japan's New Year holidays. **AFP**

Sharon breathing on his own

JERUSALEM—ISRAELI PRIME Minister Ariel Sharon began breathing on his own on Monday, the first positive sign as doctors tried to rouse him from a medically induced coma to assess brain damage from a massive stroke.

"He is still connected to respirators that help him but the prime minister is breathing spontaneously," Shimon Mor-Yosef, director of Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, told reporters.

As Israelis kept anxious vigil for the 77-year-old leader many had seen as the best hope for resolving their conflict with the Palestinians, Sharon's medical team gradually began reducing his sedation to help him regain consciousness.

The process is critical for determining the extent Sharon's faculties have been impaired and his chances for survival, though outside experts say there is no guarantee he will awaken from anesthesia.

But only an hour after doctors began weaning Sharon off drugs that have kept him in an induced coma since suffering the stroke on Wednesday, they reported he had begun taking breaths.

"This is one stage, a first stage," Mor-Yosef said.

But he said Sharon remained in critical condition.

Sharon's surgeons say there is a good chance he will live.

But medical consensus is he has suffered too much damage to ever return to politics, an arena he has dominated in recent years like no figure since founding Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. **Reuters**

World's top polluters to fight climate change in alternative meet

CANBERRA—SIX OF THE world's top polluters meet in Sydney this week to promote clean energy technology as a way to tackle climate change without sacrificing economic

growth.

The United States, Japan, China, India, Australia and South Korea will hold the first meeting of the Asia-Pacific Partnership for Clean Development

and Climate—a pact they say will complement, not rival, the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases.

But unlike Kyoto, the six members will not be backing fixed tar-

gets for cutting emissions from burning fossil fuels and some analysts expect any resolution to be vague.

Government sources told Reuters that the partnership

plans to create a fund to help develop cleaner energy technologies, which Australia would kickstart with about A\$100 million (\$75 million). **Reuters**



RUNAWAY—French hostage Bernard Planche, 52, speaking on a phone at a US camp close to Baghdad. Planche, who was kidnapped from his home Dec. 5 in Baghdad, ran away Jan. 7 from a farmhouse where he was held after his captors fled US and Iraqi troops who were conducting a search. **AFP**

US helicopter crashes in Iraq; 12 on board die

BAGHDAD—A US MILITARY HELICOPTER crashed in Iraq, killing all 12 on board, while five more US soldiers died in the west of the country, the US military announced Sunday.

In other developments, a French hostage kidnapped by insurgents in Baghdad a month ago and threatened with death escaped from his captors.

A US spokesperson said the cause of Saturday night's crash of the Black Hawk near the restive city of Tal Afar in northwestern Iraq was under investigation, adding that there was severe weather at the time the helicopter went down.

"A coalition helicopter crashed in a sparsely populated area 12 kilometers east of Tal Afar shortly before midnight, killing passengers and crew," a statement said.

The Black Hawk was part of a two-aircraft mission flying between bases in northern Iraq when communications were lost with the aircraft on Saturday night, the military said.

"Flight records indicate that eight passengers and four crew members were man-fested for the flight. An immediate search and rescue operation was launched from nearby military installations."

The spokesperson said he could not immediately give details about those on board the plane which was found at about noon on Sunday.

It was the second deadliest US military crash in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion, after a transport helicopter went down last January, killing 31 aboard.

Earlier, the US military announced that five US Marines had been killed in and around the restive western Iraqi town of Fallujah over the weekend. **AFP**

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Man who shot Pope in 1981 to be freed

ANKARA, TURKEY—THE TURKISH MAN who shot Pope John Paul II in 1981 will be released on parole on Thursday, his lawyer told The Associated Press on Sunday.

A Turkish court last week decided to free Mehmet Ali Agca "on parole on Jan. 12," his lawyer, Mustafa Demirbag told AP by telephone.

"We were hiding the decision but it is not a secret anymore," Demirbag said. "He was eligible to be released on parole because he had no disciplinary problems."

Earlier, the semiofficial Anatolia news agency said a Turkish court had approved the release of Agca, 47, who was extradited to Turkey in 2000 after serving almost 20 years in prison in Italy for shooting and wounding the Pope in St. Peter's Square in Rome.

John Paul II met with Agca in Italy's Rebibbia prison in 1983 and forgave him for the shooting. The motive for the attack remains unclear.

Vatican spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the Vatican would defer to the judgment of the Turkish tribunal.

"The Holy See has learned only from news agencies of the news of the possible freedom of Ali Agca," he said in a brief statement. "The Holy See, before a problem of a judicial nature, submits to the decisions of the tribunals involved in this matter."

Demirbag, explaining the court decision, said Agca was sentenced to life in prison, which amounts to 36 years under Turkish law, for murdering Turkish journalist Abdilpekci in 1979.

Agca served less than six months in a Turkish prison in 1979 for killing Ipekci be-

fore he escaped, resurfacing in 1981 in Rome. And an amnesty in 1991 deducted 10 more years from his time, leaving some 25½ years to be served, he said.

The court last week further deducted his 20 years in prison in Italy based on a new article in the penal code, which was amended by the Turkish government recently at the request of the European Union to raise the standard of human rights.

Agca who was extradited to Turkey on June 14, 2000 will have completed his time on Jan. 12, Demirbag said.

"On Jan. 12 he will complete his five years, six months and 27 days in prison," Demirbag said. "They can't keep him one more second."

After his extradition, Agca was separately sentenced to seven years and four months for two robberies in Turkey in 1979, but that imprisonment was ignored since he was already sentenced to life in prison, Demirbag said.

His family and another lawyer said they were not aware of the court decision. But it was not clear if they were hiding the court decision too.

"I'm surprised," another lawyer Dogan Yildirim said by telephone earlier. "If it's true, justice will finally be served. He has been in prison for so long."

Agca's sister, Fatma Agca, said: "We did not hear it." She was speaking to the AP from the family home in the southeastern city of Malatya.

The Anatolia agency suggested that Agca, a draft-dodger, might be taken to a military station following his release and to a military hospital later in Istanbul for medi-



PHOTO taken May 13, 1981 shows Mehmet Ali Agca (center) surrounded by Italian policemen in Rome, a few minutes after he attempted to kill Pope John Paul II during a public audience at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. AP

cal checks, a routine procedure.

However, it was not clear if he will be enlisted in the Army, which generally accepts conscripts until 41.

Agca reportedly sympathized with the Gray Wolves, a far right-wing militant group that fought street battles against leftists in the 1970s. He initially confessed to killing Ipekci, one of the country's most prominent left-wing newspaper columnists, but later retracted his statements.

UN envoy to Burma quits, slams entry ban

KUALA LUMPUR—THE UNITED nations envoy to Burma, Razali Ismail, said Sunday he had quit his post after being refused entry for the past two years to the military-ruled country where he is pushing for reforms.

Razali, a former Malaysian diplomat who has been trying to break Burma's political impasse since 2000, said he would not renew his contract which ran until the end of last year.

"My contract lapsed after December 2005. It is clear they (the military junta) do not want me back," Razali told AFP.

"I have not been allowed to visit the Burma leadership in Rangoon in the past 22 months."

He said that the United Nations had accepted his decision to quit his role as secretary-general Kofi Annan's special envoy to Burma.

"So it is time for me to make an exit," he said.

Razali was the catalyst for landmark contacts between the Burma government and democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, which created excitement when they began in October 2000.

Fresh hopes for change in Burma, which has been ruled by the military for four decades, came when Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National



RAZALI

League for Democracy (NLD), was released from house arrest in May 2002.

But those hopes evaporated a year later when the Nobel Peace Prize winner was taken into "protective custody" after clashes between her supporters and those of the government. She remains confined to her home in Yangon.

NLD spokesperson U Lwin said in Yangon that Razali's resignation was not unexpected after his long period in the cold.

"It doesn't surprise me. He's been trying to come here for the past two years. He must have

become very frustrated. I'm not surprised he's resigned," he told AFP.

Thai foreign ministry spokesperson Sihesak Phuangketkeow said Razali had played a "key role" in Burma.

"I do hope that his resignation will not affect the UN's attempt to build peace in Burma," he said. "I hope that Burma realizes the need to maintain a contact channel with the world community."

Razali has regularly expressed pessimism over prospects for change in Burma and said last month that Southeast Asia's new campaign to push the generals into releasing Aung San Suu Kyi was unlikely to be successful any time soon.

He has also urged the 10-nation regional body, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), to take a tougher line against the ex-British colony formerly known as Burma.

Asean, which usually maintains a policy of noninterference in each member countries' affairs, has recently stepped up its criticism of Burma in the face of mounting pressure from the rest of the international community.

At its summit in Kuala Lumpur last month the region's leaders wrung an agreement from Burma to accept a visit

from their representative, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, to check on the progress of promised reforms.

However, in a move likely to upset its neighbors, the military regime said Friday it was too busy to receive Syed Hamid this month because it is in the process of relocating its capital.

Razali expressed disappointment with the development and warned of further delays.

"I think Syed Hamid's visit is in line with Asean's aspirations. I think more delays could be expected," he said.

Burma was accepted into Asean in 1997 but has become a source of embarrassment for the regional body which is now urging it to move towards democracy and release hundreds of political prisoners.

The country's military took power in 1988 after crushing massive pro-democracy demonstrations, and refused to hand power to Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD after it won 1990 general elections.

The junta is holding a national convention to draft a constitution under a "roadmap to democracy", but no timetable has been set and Aung San Suu Kyi's party is boycotting the process because of her continued detention.



MIGRANT workers warm themselves around a bonfire in Allahabad, in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, Jan. 9. Schools across Uttar Pradesh were ordered shut Monday as icy winds and bitter cold claimed eight more lives overnight. AP

Cold snap kills over 180 in S. Asia, closes schools

LUCKNOW, INDIA—SCHOOLS across northern India's Uttar Pradesh state were ordered shut Monday, as the death toll from a spell of icy winds and bitter cold since November rose to more than 180 across South Asia, officials and news reports said.

Hundreds of homeless people huddled around bonfires lit by municipal authorities and volunteer groups in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, where 109 people have died since the cold snap began, including eight who froze to death overnight, said police spokesperson Avinash Mehrotra.

"All those who died were homeless," he said.

Kiranpal Singh, the state's education minister, said the schools would remain shut until Jan. 14 "in view of the cold wave sweeping" the region.

In the Indian capital of New Delhi, temperatures plunged to a 70-year low of 0.2 C (32.4 F) on Sunday, the meteorology department said. Temperatures at this time of year are normally about 7 C (42.6 F) higher.

At least 15 other people have died of cold in northern Punjab and Haryana states since November, while another seven deaths have been reported in Jammu-Kashmir state, bringing India's death

toll to 131. In neighboring Pakistan, at least 47 people have died of cold and pneumonia from a week of frigid weather in the country's remote northern Himalayan region, Dawn newspaper reported Monday.

The region is outside areas hit by a giant Oct. 8 earthquake that killed at least 87,000 people.

The World Health Organization last week reported 18 cold-related deaths in the quake zone over the previous six weeks.

Anecdotal reports suggest many more may have died, although the deaths have not been tallied by authorities, in part because some areas are inaccessible.

The meteorological department forecast cloudy weather for Monday, and rain and snow for Tuesday, in most of the country, including quake-hit areas. Another spell of heavy rain and snow is expected in the quake zone from Jan. 14 to 22.

In Nepal, meanwhile, at least three people died Sunday from the cold in Janakpur, 200 km southeast of the capital Kathmandu, said Umesh Pokhrel, a government official. He had no information on how many people have died so far in the Himalayan kingdom.

AP

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MORE HUMAN CASES IN TURKEY

Authorities struggle to cope as bird flu threatens Europe

ANKARA—FIVE MORE TURKS, including two small boys and an adult in Ankara, tested positive for H5N1 bird flu Sunday as the deadly virus continued to move west toward Europe and authorities seemed to have trouble coping with the disease.

A team of experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) traveled to the worst-hit regions in Turkey's east to assess the government's response and look for any signs of the much-feared human-to-human transmission of the virus.

The new cases—two in the eastern city of Van and three in Ankara—were all from the lethal H5N1 strain of avian influenza, a health ministry official told the Anatolia news agency, bringing to nine the number of infected people, all but one of them children.

Of the nine, a brother and sister from eastern Turkey died last week after playing with sick chicken, becoming the first victims of bird flu outside Southeast Asia and China, where the disease has killed more than 70 people since 2003.

A third sibling also perished, but the cause of her death is still to be determined.

The cases in Ankara, situated some 1,000 km from the region where the deaths occurred, mark the further westward spread of the disease.

A senior WHO scientist said the outbreak in Turkey did not indicate increased risk for humans and blamed the spread on insufficient health controls in the vast country.

"It seems that the epidemic has been spreading among animals in Turkey for much longer than believed," the WHO's Klaus Stoeckl told German radio.

As emergency culls continued and more bans were imposed on the sale and movement of fowl, people in remote regions in the impoverished, mainly Kurdish

east handled the crisis with their own methods.

In the village of Telceker, on the border with Iran, dead chickens were dumped into a stream or buried in plastic bags.

"Sometimes the dogs unearth the chickens and then the crows come to eat them," 12-year-old Murat Ozer said.

His neighbor, Gogey, put her last surviving hen in a plastic bag and buried it in a pit, complaining that no health or veterinary official had so far visited the village where poultry continue to perish.

Newspapers splashed pictures of children tossing dead chickens in the air and cleaning slaughtered birds with their bare hands at poultry bazaars, officially banned in the east.

Many families were hiding their birds from slaughter teams, reluctant to part with what is often their most precious belongings.

With many people in the region illiterate and not speaking Turkish, efforts to raise their awareness are likely to produce less than the desired impact.

Iran, which shares a lengthy border with eastern Turkey, closed at least one crossing point between the two countries, local Turkish officials told Anatolia.

The two boys hospitalized in Ankara, aged two and five, were believed to have touched gloves used by their father to carry to the authorities two wild ducks dead from bird flu he had found earlier this week in a reservoir outside their hometown of Beypazari, doctors said.

The third patient, a 60-year-old man from an Ankara suburb, was infected after coming in close contact with chicken he bred.

The three were reported well, with the boys showing no sign of illness yet.

The new cases at the university hospital in Van, which treats the majority of people suspected of being infected, were identified as a girl and a boy, aged nine and three.

Two others, a five-year-old boy and an eight-year-old girl, have already been confirmed as H5N1 carriers in the same hospital, where some 40 people are currently undergoing treatment.

Health Minister Recep Akdag, accompanying the WHO team to the east, said there was no indication so far to suggest the disease is being transmitted between humans—a possibility scientists fear may spark a deadly global pandemic.

As dozens of panicked people rushed to hospitals across the country, the presence of the virus among winged animals was also confirmed in Istanbul and two other western regions.

Istanbul is the westernmost point where bird flu has been found since it resurfaced in Turkey last month, after a first outbreak in the northwest in October was successfully contained.

Syria, Turkey's southern neighbor, announced it was clear of the virus and denied rumors that a man had died from the disease near the border with Turkey.

Russia said it was planning to send several health experts to help Turkey "as soon as possible" in response to a WHO request. AFP

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Poor and hungry

A RECENT SURVEY MADE BY THE SOCIAL WEATHER Stations showed that nearly 17 out of 100 Filipinos said they went hungry at least once in the fourth quarter of last year. Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed also described themselves as poor, up 8 percentage points from 49 percent in the previous quarter.

EDITORIAL

But we do not need a survey to validate what everybody already knows: the Philippines is a nation where the great majority are poor and where many people go hungry some, if not most, of the time. In urban centers like Metro Manila, poor people scrounging for something to eat from garbage cans and dumps are a common sight.

Last Monday, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the release of P35 billion in government savings to subsidize rice and noodles and finance projects for the poor. But low-priced rice and noodles should be considered only a temporary palliative and not a permanent solution to the problem of poverty and hunger. The President recognizes this, and has announced that the fund would also finance pro-poor programs such as education, housing, health and public works.

A reexamination of the problem of poverty and hunger should go beyond temporary palliatives and short-term solutions and prompt government decision makers to review policies and programs. Emmanuel de Dios, a UP economic professor who directed the "Crisis of Poverty" Research Program, said the principal reason poverty has remained high was "the economy's simple failure to grow rapidly enough, sustain that growth and generate employment." De Dios said that solving the problem of poverty will mean primarily focusing on growth and on the opening of new jobs. "Poverty in this country is high because growth has not been sustained and because whatever benefits it has generated have been unevenly distributed," he said. The Philippines is actually two nations in one country: a nation of the very rich and another nation of the very poor. In the 1990s, ten percent of the population controlled 36 percent of total income. The richest 20 percent enjoyed more than half of the income and the poorest 40 percent received only 14 percent of it. The situation remains pretty much the same today.

A total solution to the problem of poverty and hunger has to focus on the rural areas where two-thirds of all poor families live. An earnest, sustained implementation of the agrarian reform program should create jobs and increase income in the rural areas. But because of resistance from the landed elite, the agrarian reform program has been carried out in fits and starts. The elite have to be convinced that for the nation to achieve faster economic growth, an honest-to-goodness agrarian reform program has to be carried out.

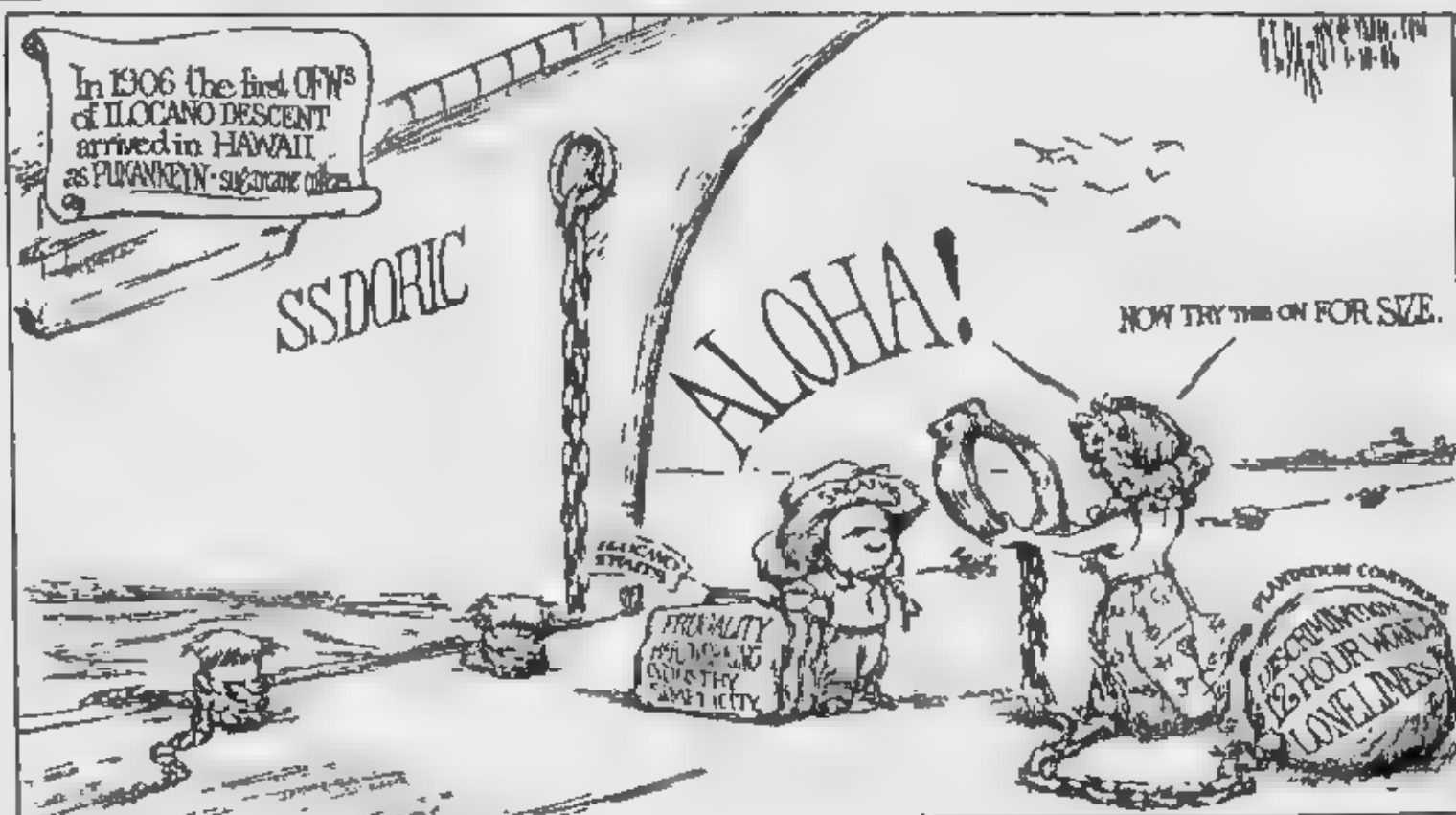
Many people resist liberalization, but it is already a fact of life. We cannot turn back the hands of time. The way to fight what are perceived as the evil effects of liberalization is to restructure the economy to promote greater competitiveness. Education and skills training should upgrade the occupational standing of the members of the work force, so that even if they have to go abroad to work they will command higher wages and salaries.

Another UP economics professor, Gonzalo Jurado, suggests that the industrial sector should adopt modern technology and should be assisted in doing so. Improved technology at the top of the industrial pyramid would benefit industries at the lower level of the industrial structure and enable these industries to create more jobs. The government and the private sector will also have to increase their spending on research and development so that the country can wean itself away from dependence on foreign technology.

The President mentioned housing as one of the sectors to which part of the P35 billion would go. It's high time a massive, nationwide low-cost housing program was undertaken. It would kill two birds with one stone: relieve the housing backlog and at the same time help pump-prime the economy because of the multiplier effect of construction activity. At the same time, a more extensive infrastructure program should open up depressed areas to development and promote domestic trade.

The time may also be auspicious to improve the family planning program. An intensive educational campaign on family planning has to be conducted, and the poor should be given better access to family planning services.

The Philippines does not have to remain poor and hungry forever. It has the manpower and natural resources needed to attain a higher degree of development. What it needs is dynamic leadership, an enlightened private sector and the right programs and policies.



Murky lakes

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

But kiss tourists goodbye if we treat lakes as latrine-cum-garbage bins. Look at Laguna de Bay, our largest lake. Jose Rizal depicted its beauty in his novels, "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo."

Not anymore. Raw sewage from the metropolis smears the surface waters of its tributaries. Add detergents, chemicals, fertilizer runoffs, heavy metals, etc. and the result is a noxious cocktail that kills fish and plants. A superb water reservoir is turned into a turbid cesspool.

Lack of infrastructure in Lanao results "in most localities around the lake, lacking water for drinking or irrigation," notes the Food and Agriculture Organization which operates an environmental management project. "Filthy water cannot be washed," says an African proverb.

Pressure meanwhile builds up on lakes and their vital ecosystems. This stems from waves of migrants, food need, new technology—and expectations.

In Cuernos de Negros and Lake Balinsasayao, Silliman scientists reported, two rare forest frogs (*Platymantis negrosensis* and *P. dorsalis*) are now rarely heard. The first "no longer exists in the forest fragments in southwestern Negros ... and is critically endangered," scientists informed the Global Amphibian Assessments Group. The other disappeared in all but one limestone fragment.

So, what's the big deal about croakers vanishing? Ask political leaders.

Their vision doesn't go beyond the next elections. Few see that disappearing Negros frogs and silent forests and empty streams signal trouble ahead.

Amphibians' permeable skin and land-and-

water habitats form early warning indicators. They signal that pollution, degradation, even climate change, are breaching danger points. Frogs and other amphibians are like "canaries in the coal mine," US zoologists told the Boston Globe. "They're red flags to watch."

Of 5,743 known species of amphibians, 1,856 face extinction, the Journal Science reports. "More than 100 species may already be extinct, and 43 percent are in a population decline—many for unknown reasons."

If lakes are to survive, voices other than that of parochial politicians must be heard. "Encourage universities and scientific institutions to integrate critical national problems in their teaching and research agendas—and speak up," suggest Living Lake leaders.

Bicol University College of Fisheries researchers in Abay probed threats to the world's smallest commercial fish, the *sinarapan* (*mistiichthys luzonensis*). It once flourished in the Lake Manapao Sanctuary of Camarines Sur. But over-fishing by motorized vessels savaged its breeding and feeding grounds. So did fishing by poison. Sharp drops in *sinarapan* catches alarmed lake communities. And scientists helped draft action programs.

Does introducing species like tilapia *nitroica* unleash predators in lakes? Nile tilapia was introduced in Camarines, Palawan and Lanao, among other provinces, during the "Green Revolution," with its overload of good intentions, leaky quarantine rules and a shortage of scientific caution. Introduced perch became predators and turned Uganda's Lake Victoria into the world's "largest pool of dead water." Known as the "aquatic chicken," tilapia is farmed in 85 countries today. But doubts persist here.

Policies and programs for lakes to address such issues are of more import to Filipinos than Estrada's next pass from detention. Official mind-sets must be recast before fishing nets will strain to breaking point from rich catches, as they once did in Lake Galilee.

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

And now the teachers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



I share Lichauco's dismay, or alarm, at the depth of the brain drain. This is brain drain in the very literal sense of the word. We're no longer being drained of excess labor, we're being drained of critical manpower. It's bad enough that the hospitals and clinics are losing doctors and nurses, it's worse that the universities are losing teachers. Last I looked, which was five years ago in the Asia Week ranking of schools, our top three universities, which used to vie for the top spots among Asian academic institutions, had slipped to No. 48, No. 71 and No. 72. It's Singapore that is outpacing everyone, paying huge sums to teachers from Asia and other countries. It has its priorities in the right place. Knowledge is the greatest capital there is.

The loss to the country is additionally enormous given that the cost of training the teachers and nurses, many of whom are doctors. The joke that you have to pass the medical board exams first to study to become a nurse falls on this country. To paraphrase a local proverb, we're the ones who cooked the rice, somebody else ate it.

Now, every time you complain about this, you're bound to encounter an idiot who tells you to criticize the politicians all you want but leave the caregivers and other OFWs well enough alone. What can I say? It is a testament to our increasing loss not just of the people who are taking care of our bodies but those who are taking care of our minds that many Filipinos are now hard put to think, let alone think clearly. Let me put it as starkly as I can: I do not blame OFWs, I do not disparage caregivers, I do not denigrate the dignity of labor in whatever form. But I do fulminate

against several things.

One is the havoc the Diaspora is wreaking upon the country, and will continue to wreak upon the country. Who doesn't want to get out of the country given the absolute mess the government has made of it? But understanding the reasons people are desperate to leave it cannot blind you either to the fact that the massive exodus, or the compelling desire to join, is pauperizing the country beyond belief. When you have thousands of doctors turning themselves into caregivers just to work abroad, you know you're in deep organic fertilizer. You add to that your best teachers, and Lichauco is right to complain the not-very-long-term impact is bound to be more incalculable than the loss of our forests and fishes.

Two is the attitude of mediocrity—no, the defeatist mentality that says beggars cannot be choosers—that the entire syndrome is foisting on us. I have no problem with caregivers per se, I have every problem with the height of our national aspiration, or the zenith of our personal ambitions, being reduced to becoming a caregiver. I have a problem with the entire educational system being refashioned—whole nursing wings have sprouted in universities—to serve the purpose. I have a problem with an entire nation whose mental, intellectual and human horizons do not go past surviving by cleaning the toilet bowls of the world. We're not just the sick man of Asia, we're the joke of Asia.

And three is a government that not only does not attempt to hold on to the country's best and brightest but drives them mercilessly away. I do not know what the solution to the current Diaspora is; it's become a monstrous problem. I do know the solution to it is not a government that is making this country unlivable and profits from it by getting more and more dollars from the people it drives away. That is the real double whammy.

But now the teachers too! The only time the Diaspora will serve a great purpose is if we started exporting our public officials. With the label: "Not fragile, feel free to rough up."

That lousy feeling

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda
Olivares-Cunanan



SEN. MAR ROXAS, A US-TRAINED INVESTMENT banker before he went into politics, has been criticized for "belittling" the strong peso's impact on the lives of the common folk. He was also criticized for blunting Malacañang's "unrelenting optimism" over positive indicators such as the phenomenal surge of stocks, bonds and real estate property. He had said that while these "headline statistics" trumpeted by the government are good, "why is it that everybody is feeling lousy and their sales reflect this lousiness?"

I agree about the lousy feeling, but perhaps the "headline statistics" are not solely to blame for it. It's a fact that hot money, i.e., funds invested in stocks, debt papers and real property, are an indication of confidence in the government; moreover, everyone knows that hot money is usually followed by foreign direct investments which provide jobs.

The lousy feeling, I believe, stems from the terrible loss of our politics over the past year, where the opposition has spared no effort to knock down this government, principally through interminable investigations that led to nowhere. If the statements of foreign investment companies are any indication, political instability has been the primary reason for our unattractive investments climate. Unfortunately the Senate to which Roxas belongs has been a primary contributor to the lousy feeling everyone has, what with all those grandstanding senators.

In Rome a few months ago, Philippine Ambassador Philippe Lhuillier told us about an exploratory study of the Filipino youth phenomenon in Italy today. He sought our help in publicizing it so that appropriate help could be obtained. The study was conducted by a group called Filipinas OFSPES, in collaboration with Sentro Filipino, founded in 1991, that brings together the more than 40 Catholic church communities there into one Filipino chaplaincy. It noted that while there are between 30,000 and 40,000 Filipinos in Rome and about 105,000 in the entire Italy (Lhuillier thinks it's closer to 180,000), making Pinoy the fourth largest migrant commu-

nity in Italy, the number of Pinoy youth (those between 12 to 30 years old) has been rising dramatically. This is because parents legally bring in their children before they reach the 18-year-old limit, and an estimated 750 babies are born to Filipino parents in Italy yearly. While it's a positive thing for Pinoy families to be reunited with their children, serious problems and concerns related to these "second generation migrants" ought to be addressed by various institutions, such as the Philippine and Italian governments, the Church, parents and the OFW community abroad.

The study noted that many youths migrate to Italy not of their own volition. Uprooted from their familiar environment and friends and loved ones back home, the youths encounter new stresses from adjustment to a new culture and system with its new set of values and norms, which often conflict with their old Pinoy values, and a totally unfamiliar language. Moreover, many OFW parents are often too busy with multiple jobs to attend to their uprooted children. Thus, it's not surprising that most migrant youths undergo tremendous, even overwhelming feelings of insecurity and doubt, loneliness, failure and lack of confidence. At times, they engage in "socially undesirable behavior" such as dropping out of school, gambling, drinking, drug abuse and teenage pregnancies.

The adverse situation is by no means confined to Pinoy youths, and Italian schools are said to be quite unprepared for the explosion of foreign enrollment from 30,000 to 300,000 in 10 years. Fortunately, there have been other studies of the migrant youth phenomenon in host countries such

as the United States, as well as in countries with heavy migrant outflow such as Mexico (which has over 16 million citizens in the US who remit over \$16 billion yearly to their native land). The Philippines can certainly learn from them. Then, too, our government and the host country, Italy, could approach the problems jointly, e.g., providing a study of Italian prior to departure would certainly help the Pinoy youths adjust.

A different problem was recently raised by two visitors from the United Kingdom, Charles Kelly and Cynthia Alcantara-Barker. Qualified immigration advisers, who run their own successful practice in London, they recently came here to launch their book, "How 2 Come to the UK—To Live Work Study or Visit." The book, their latest collaborative effort (they also co-author a column on "Immigration Matters" for several leading British publications), is a comprehensive and easy-to-follow general guide to the many ways one can legally settle in the UK. It includes case studies governed by complex immigration laws, among them those involving work permits, family settlement and entry clearance.

Their thesis is simple: despite the many opportunities available to those who want to go to the UK, "there are still thousands of Filipinos who land there clueless about where and how to start their new lives, ending up stranded, aimless, helpless and thousands of pounds in debt." They point out that there are legal ways to enter the country, hence, there's no need to go TNT. They are ready to advise Pinoy who want to do so, and only ask that they be candid about their intentions.

I must admit that when our Corito Fiel invited me to their press luncheon, I had ambivalent feelings for why should I endorse a book that encourages emigration? But after Barker, a native of San Pablo City, Laguna, who is herself a success story as a 17-year immigrant in UK, explained that it teaches Filipinos to go legit, I told myself going abroad is a fact of our national life, so we might as well learn to do it the right and dignified way.

How do we value our young people?

WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN THE NEW YEAR. EIGHT young people, two of them women, died in a fire in one of the infamous boardinghouses of the University Belt.

Seven of the fatalities were found in a single room, and authorities said they may have failed to respond to their fellow boarders' frantic shouts and banging on the door because they had all passed out after a drinking bout. The eighth victim was found to have been electrocuted in another room.

After every such tragedy, both media and local authorities go on a binge of chest-thumping, bemoaning how dormitories and boardinghouses in both the congested neighborhoods of the "U-belt" area as well as in Diliman, where the biggest campus of the University of the Philippines is located, are really "fire traps" that routinely violate regulations and fire safety codes.

Indeed, this newspaper even quotes a spokesperson of the United Fire Fighters of the Philippines who testified in a Senate hearing in 2001 that "by their looks alone, these are apparently fire traps."

A visit to any of these boardinghouses, especially those that shelter bed-spacers, will immediately show how congested, cramped and dangerous such places are. Young people—the majority of them youths from the provinces living in Manila to study or work—are crowded into small rooms, in triple- or even quadruple-bunks, with little ventilation and scarce room for privacy. Dozens of boarders must jostle for time and space—and even a meager water supply—in shared bathrooms.

Such a setting seems the ideal breeding ground for illness and infections, not to mention vices and unplanned, unprotected sex. It's a wonder the young people cooped up in such confines ever find time or opportunity to study!

I'M SURE the parents of these young adults—including those of the eight who died in the fire—sent off their children with only the best of intentions and the highest of hopes. It is not an easy thing, in the context of Philippine culture and the tight relations maintained

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



among kinfolk, to let one's child go off alone to the city, there to lead a life isolated from the comforts of home, the familiarity of the neighborhood, and the counsel of elders. But parents do this every year mainly because the children, the brightest and bravest of their generation in their locales, bring with them the promise of a brighter future and the possibility of freeing their families from the trap of poverty.

So the young people come to the city burdened not just with the need to adjust to a new, frightening environment, but also with a "mission" to fulfill their families' often-outsize hopes and expectations. Little do they or their parents realize that they will be placed in a setting that not only makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to live up to their responsibilities, but may also lead them down different, unexpected and unplanned paths.

Dying in a fire that engulfs their rattletrap dwellings is just one of many risks they face in the years they will spend battling the demons of the city.

MANY years ago—decades ago, in fact—there was a news item that the Manila police department was going to deploy more officers in the U-Belt area mainly to guard against student protesters and "subversives" infiltrating campuses.

At this time (and to this day, I bet), what worried students in the Sampaloc-Moraya-C.M. Recto area—the triangle comprising U-Belt—were not lightning rallies or underground organizations, but rather petty crimes, rising public transport costs, costly student meals and, yes, run-down fire traps posing as dorms and boardinghouses.

In my day as a student on the fringes of U-Belt,

admittedly a long time ago, stories abounded of the perils we student commuters faced. Particularly memorable is that of the female student who was accosted by a snatcher in the dark sidewalk along Forbes and had her necklace ripped from around her neck. The girl started to hurry away but was rudely yanked back by the criminal, who forced the necklace down her throat apparently in anger because the necklace was a "fake."

Judging from stories my nephews and nieces and young friends tell me, criminality in the U-Belt area, as well as in Diliman where other learning institutions are concentrated, has in fact escalated. Only these days, the targets of petty criminals are no longer jewelry or purses, but cell phones and ATM cards.

WE CLAIM to put a premium on the welfare of young people, proclaiming them to be the hope of the nation, the future of our race.

And yet, as the deaths of eight boarders in Sampaloc tell me, as well as the tales that abound about how young people are routinely preyed upon, assaulted, exploited and suspected of wrongdoing, it seems the rhetoric is not supported by concrete action or responsive policies.

If local and national authorities were truly concerned about the welfare of students in U-Belt, for instance, then they should have done something long ago about the boardinghouses and dorms. And we're not talking only about fire regulations and fire safety—such as having fire escapes, sprinklers and fire extinguishers—but also about basic structural safety and even just rudimentary sanitation.

In other countries, governments, recognizing that investing in the youth today will pay dividends in the country's improved socio-economic prospects, pour money not just into college and post-graduate scholarships, but also into building quality facilities that would allow the students to realize their full potential.

In contrast, are we not letting our "best and brightest" go to waste, destroying their future even before they have a chance to fulfill it?

Of the old nobility

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



from trade with the Portuguese (these had not been maintained), they succumbed to the superior number of the invaders. The terrifying effects were horrible primarily because of the damage to the spirit of the people. Dailisan died in the fray, leaving his brother Pagbuaya as the sole ruler.

Realizing that the Terrenates would not rest until they achieved their total destruction, Pagbuaya decided to search for a safer habitat which was not so open to the joangas of their enemy and could be defended with more ease. Believing that the site had proven unlucky for them and fortune had demonstrated their enmity, they left following the custom that the house where a ruler had died be abandoned by his people and remain unoccupied awaiting its ruin.

A thousand families followed Pagbuaya not counting unmarried men. In Bohol, it was the law to give a dowry before one could marry or, more accurately, buy a wife. But there were many whose poverty prevented them from marrying. Among these were the slaves of the prince who numbered more than 500. The fugitives left their home on the shores of the strait up to the coast of Bacayan and took refuge in the area of the Loboc River where their names were preserved for generations in a few families of their lineage who were left behind after the next exodus.

Not finding hills by the riverside, feeling imprisoned by the solitary mountains and deprived of the

sea, Pagbuaya again decided to leave. He and his followers migrated to the island of Mindanao, 15 leagues from their old home.

They had not settled for long in their new site before causing concern among the rulers of surrounding areas and the king of the grandiose island of Borneo. The latter sent an ambassador with two joangas, but wary of what had befallen them previously, the Dapitanos were set to reject his overture of friendship. While the ambassador awaited their decision, they saw in the horizon the ships of Magellan and his squadron.

In time, Pagbuaya was converted and his son Manoc followed the faith of his father and, wishing to become a Christian, aided the Spaniards in their first conquest of the islands, primarily the conquest of Manila and Camarines, bringing his soldiers with him and many subjects from tribes under him.

This prince was the first in the roster of those converted to the faith carrying the name of the king on his standard and calling himself Don Pedro Manuel Manoc. He went on to accomplish great exploits: aside from his services in Manila and Camarines, he went into combat against the Moros of Mindanao and Jolo, attacking them in their own houses on one occasion. He also fought the fierce Caragas who were then the terror of the islands. He subdued the town of Bayug in Mindanao.

It was this prince, the father of Doña Maria Uray, who was, for Pastells, a living model of the southern tribes by virtue of his Christianity. Before he died, he requested that he be buried in the city of Cebu, instructing in his last will and testament that his bones be brought to the cathedral. (Simply out of curiosity, it would be interesting to know whether the poor man's wishes were carried out. If so, does he lie in peace in the cathedral of that southern city?)

Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Review

I'VE BEEN SEATED HERE IN FRONT OF MY COMPUTER for almost an hour now. I'm trying to figure out what I am going to do to fight my boredom while I wait for the sun to rise. Life has been like this since October 2004, the month that followed that gruesome bar examination.

I was one of the hopefuls in the September 2004 bar exams. I had resigned from work as early as November the year before to concentrate on my review and make better preparations for the bar. I had been a working student, who struggled my way through law school. After graduation, I flew to Manila with high hopes for my review classes at San Beda College.

Life there was totally different from what I was accustomed to in the province. It was not my first time to set foot in the big city though. I had been there twice before, but only for a few weeks. I had to make so many adjustments in my lifestyle when I was there, I would say.

I, along with a few former classmates from Silliman University, rented an apartment near San Beda, fronting the Chino Roces Bridge. We were all witnesses to the shouting and burning of placards by militant groups, who marched there almost every day to air their grievances before the people in Malacañang. It was much easier then to memorize their jingles than articles of the Civil Code.

During our stay, never did we have a dull moment. I can still vividly remember the night when a fire gutted a house near Aguila Street. And every time I think about what I did, it brings a smile to my face.

We were all asleep and our sweet dreams were broken by the loud alarms from fire trucks. And adrenaline rush prompted me to jump off my bed. And since I didn't have wings, I almost broke both of my legs and more. It's not that we don't have fire trucks in our province. It's just because we are not used to hearing so many fire trucks responding to a fire.

From that time on, I would hear fire trucks almost every night but it did not rouse me from my sleep anymore. I quickly got used to their sounds.

One thing that added color to my stay in Mendiola was the Light Rail Transit. It served as my alarm clock in the mornings. The screeching sound it made on the rails and the blowing of its horns were more effective than a thousand alarm clocks. The LRT was the first thing I would see from my window every time I woke up.

And then there was Centro Escolar University. What a wonderful sight it was to me. It was a constant reminder that I was in the big city, far from home.

It was also while reviewing for the bar that I learned to live on a tight budget, thanks to Adelaide. I haven't met a person as *kuripot* as my friend Adz. If we were being frugal it was not because our parents did not give us enough to buy decent meals, but because we were terribly afraid that we might starve if we didn't spend our money wisely. So when we bought our breakfast, Adz and I would divide it in two, keeping half of it for lunch. There were times when our breakfast ended up as our lunch and dinner, too. Put yourself in our shoes, and I assure you that in month's time, you will be as skinny as your favorite model.

Who can forget the handsome guys in San Beda? It was like raining men every day for Ate Ritchie, my room mate with an Adam's apple.

Visiting the churches around the University Belt became part of our lives during the review. Funny how we become instant devotees when we need something from the Lord. Even Our Lady of Manaoag in faraway Pangasinan and the convent of the Pink Sisters in Baguio were visited by some of our fellow examinees.

Now looking around the peaceful surroundings in our place brings back memories of the people on Recto Avenue, who make the street their homes. The first time I walked down that avenue, my instinct told me to walk faster or, better yet, to run. Some people were openly sniffing rugby, children included, maybe to forget the cravings of their stomachs.

I may have not made it as a lawyer on my first try, but the rich experiences I had during the review taught me many lessons in life. The friends I came to know are blessings enough for me to be thankful about. The family of Mandang Vicente, the caretaker of the building, welcomed and treated us with kindness. They showed me that being happy has nothing to do with having material things.

My six-month stay in Manila exposed me to the different struggles of the people I met there, making me appreciate more the blessings I enjoy now. Failing the bar is not the end of my dreams, I always tell myself. From that sad experience, I learned that when you want something badly, you have to strive hard and pray hard. I did the best I could, but the Lord did not grant what I wanted that time. Maybe He's got some other things in store for me or it's not the perfect time yet.

Cindy T. Hisona, 29, finished law at Silliman University in Davao City and now works for the city government of Bayawan, Oriental Negros.

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THEY SAID

Healthy CTPL

"We want to see a healthy competition and not a monopoly."

—Finance Secretary Margarito Reyes on plans of the Government Service Insurance System to corner the nation's comprehensive third-party liability policies for vehicle owners

Rewarding thoughts

"To see one's byline can be affirming enough but to shape public opinion is more rewarding."

—Re. Cyrille Cabanillas, one of INQUIRER's provincial correspondents

Art of sharing

"What else is an artist's talent for if you don't share it?"

—Artist Jess Aberra, creator of INQUIRER's official mascot Geyto, an teaching art for free to displaced children of city dwellers in Anjipolo and Taguig

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Congressmen will impeach Comelec commissioners?

LAST YEAR, THE SUPREME COURT NULLIFIED the Commission on Elections' P1.24-billion contract with Mega Pacific for the purchase of counting machines, citing irregularities in the bidding process. The Supreme Court also urged the Comelec and the Office of the Solicitor General to recover the more than P1 billion (actually, P1.05 billion, according to the Senate blue ribbon committee) paid to the "winning" bidder.

In the ongoing budget hearing, the Comelec is asking for P10 billion, a 900-percent increase from last year. In the face of the Comelec's effrontery, the senators have asked Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and all other Comelec officials involved in the anomalous bidding and purchase of the counting machines to resign. However, because they are makers of a constitutional body, impeachment is the only way out for them.

In a rare show of unity, both houses of Congress should join hands for the impeachment of the Comelec officials. The House should initiate the impeachment process. Former commissioners of the Comelec who have had a hand in the questionable bidding and purchase should be charged in court.

Are members of Congress willing to go this far?

—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St.,
Marikina City

Clarification of 'complication'

IN THE BANNER STORY OF PDI, DEC. 18, 2005, (Gov't to Meralco: Pay up) reference was made to the plunder case I filed with the Ombudsman against the National Power Corporation and Meralco as a "complication" in the collection of Meralco's contractual debts.

Let INQUIRER readers be misled by that unfortunate characterization of the plunder case, allow me to make the following clarifications:

1. I am for the "immediate collection of the full value of the 10-year contract, which is about P44.2 billion. Napocor's selling rate at that time, as affirmed in ERG case No.2001-646/2001 900, was P2.46 per kWh.

2. The amount, the penalty for Meralco's refusal to perform a contractual obligation, should be collected from the parties who benefited from it—in this case, from the Meralco Lopez-owned IPPs, whose electricity was used (instead of Napocor power), despite its being more expensive, at P4.21 per kWh, versus Napocor's at P2.46 per kWh.

3. Napocor's failure to enforce the 10-year contract against Meralco and protect the market for its own IPPs (to which it was contractually obligated), thus leading to the notorious Purchased Power Adjustments (PPAs), amounts to criminal neglect under the anti-graft laws.

4. To the extent that Meralco, its shareholders and the Lopez-owned IPPs benefited from Napocor's failure and neglect, we think they, too, are liable under the anti-graft laws.

With this clarification, we hope it will be clear to Meralco customers that the case we filed with the Ombudsman is meant to protect them from having to pay for Meralco's violations of its contract with Napocor; and to make sure that Napocor's PPA is reduced by its full recovery of foregone market opportunities.

—GUALBERTO J. DELA LLANA,
Lot 18, Blk 21 Lapu Lapu St.,
New Capitol Estate I,
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Religious duplicity

LITO DAVID'S CONCERN ABOUT giving a satisfactory answer to his daughter who asked about honesty and cheating (PDI, 12/17/05) is precisely the reason why the bishops of the Philippines should lend a hand in asking Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to resign. But they chose to speak from both sides of the mouth when they should speak plainly and clearly and without duplicity—the way Nathaniel spoke and Jesus named

him Bartolomew, son of learning. Nathaniel spoke about the good that can come out of Galilee. So should the bishops—unless they really could not see through the eyes of 80 percent of the Filipino people that GMA cheated, not just through former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and the National Movement for Free Elections, but also with the stench of the overpriced bottled fertilizers

and the tampered certificate of canvass and election returns.

What else do bishops need for them to be convinced and to come right out and say: In a Christian democracy, cheating in the elections and vote-buying are not an option. Should the President be subject to standards well-below those that are demanded of Caesar's wife—beyond reproach, in fact and in appearance?

On morality issues like this, I

expect the leaders of my Church to take a stand, regardless of what people say about the separation of Church and State. I do not expect the leaders of my Church to play politics and to exercise what they euphemistically call diplomacy, which in my book is the letter H the Lord accused the scribes and Pharisees of and warned us all against.

—AURORA RIEL,
aurora_riel@yahoo.com



Witness to Senate vote on US bases

WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR FRONT-PAGE story titled "Behind closed doors: US bases' fate decided" (PDI, 1/2/06), I wish to state for the record, that it was not the late Sen. Jose W. Diokno who witnessed the vote; in fact, he was deceased by that time; it was former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, the grand old man of the Nationalist Movement who was at the Senate session hall to witness the vote. I was there, I witnessed him stand and raise his right fist.

Secondly, it was not "behind closed doors" as it was covered live on ABS-CBN. In fact, to this day, there are taped recordings of that historic event which can be reviewed. The Filipino people watched the debate for weeks on national television—from the hearings in a committee of the whole to the nominal vote.

I was chief of staff of Sen. Wigberto Tañada and that gave me a historical opportunity to be part of the whole process. And together with all the staff and Senate personnel who worked behind the scenes, either for or against the bases, the experience will never be forgotten.

In the interest of truth and professional journalism, kindly correct the story.

—CONCEPCION C. ASIS,
former chief of staff
of Sen. Wigberto Tañada

We made the correction on Jan. 3, 2006. Our deep apologies to the family of the great nationalist Lorenzo Tañada.—Ed.

ConCom could have come up with proposals without consulting public

I WAS STRUCK BY THE "WHAT IS Really Immoral" paid advertisement of the Constitutional Consultative Commission (ConCom). (PDI, 1/3/06)

It stated that it is immoral and unacceptable if we do not change the system of governance that, according to the ad, has prevented effective governance. But the ConCom forgot that effective governance does not depend on just the form of government or the laws. To a much greater extent, it depends on whether we have honest or corrupt politicians and citizens.

What proof is there that a parliamentary-federal government run by the same crooked politicians will:

- remove poverty
- reduce inequality
- improve infrastructure

• improve the rule of law
• stop graft and corruption
If bad leaders and corrupt politicians are the major cause of our problems, why deprive the citizens of their right to vote and the right to remove those politicians, thus solve those problems?

Unfortunately, the ConCom failed to study the root cause of our problems as well as to find realistic and effective solutions to those problems. After wasting so much time and money, it gave us a draft constitution and transitory provisions that its members could have come up with, immediately during their first session, without going through the motions of pseudo consultations with the public.

—MANUEL A. ALCUAZ JR.,
Unit 710, Globe Telecom Plaza,
Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City

Marcelo deserves credit

WHILE I AGREE THAT GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-corruption promises are all for show, I just can't agree with Procopio Beltran, who stated in his letter (PDI, 12/27/05) that Simeon Marcelo accomplished nothing significant during his stint as the country's ombudsman.

Though just a speculation, Marcelo is said to have tendered his resignation because of pressure from the Palace concerning the case of my kababayan, former Justice Secretary Nani Perez. If the speculation is cor-

rect, it only shows that Marcelo has chosen not to compromise his conviction. This is the same conviction that prompted him to rule against another Batangueño, then the president of the Batangas State University who faced various charges of corruption and a known ally and kumpadre of another Batangueño in the Palace, who is very close to GMA.

I think Marcelo deserves credit for his anti-corruption efforts.

—CARLITO BISA,
lito_bisa@yahoo.com

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ABC 8	2:30PM	Kapamilya Channel	3:30PM	Ylang Ylang	4:30PM	My Name	5:30PM	My Name	6:30PM
ABC-CBN 2	2:30PM	Kapamilya Channel	3:30PM	Ylang Ylang	4:30PM	My Name	5:30PM	My Name	6:30PM
AXN	2:30PM	CBS Crime Scene Investigation	3:30PM	CBS Crime Scene Investigation	4:30PM	The 4400	5:30PM	The 4400	6:30PM
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Arrests confirm 'jueteng' return

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—An anti-illegal gambling unit of the Philippine National Police (PNP) from Camp Crame arrested 46 persons on board four vehicles after they allegedly held an illegal numbers game draw inside a subdivision in General Trias, Cavite late Sunday.

The arrest was made after a top official of the Cavite police flatly denied the supposed resurgence of "jueteng" as reported by Vice Gov. Johnvic Remulla.

Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, PNP Calabarzon director, said members of the Anti-Illegal Gambling Special Operations Task Force arrested the suspects after the winning jueteng combinations were drawn at Holiday Homes Subdivision at about 5:30 p.m.

Verzosa said the suspects were already on board three passenger vehicles and a Hyundai van when they were apprehended.

Most of the arrested individuals were co-bradores (bet collectors) from Cavite, he said.



A POLICEMAN holds a copy of an Inquirer issue on "jueteng" following raids in Cavite.

PH GLAJO PUNZALAN

Recovered from them were P20,000 in bets, several pieces of lastillas and other paraphernalia used in jueteng.

The raid in Cavite prompted Verzosa to order an immediate investigation of the alleged proliferation of jueteng in other areas in the region like Laguna and Batangas.

He said they would look into reports that some police officials condoned the operations of jueteng in Cavite.

"We will not tolerate our men who are remiss in their job against jueteng. I will not allow the return of this illegal activity in the region," Verzosa told the INQUIRER.

Comeback

Remulla said the arrests only showed that the underground lottery had indeed made a comeback in his province.

"The arrests proved that jueteng is again flourishing in Cavite. Unfortunately, some local officials turned a blind eye on the issue," he said in a mobile phone interview.

It was Remulla who earlier told the INQUIRER that jueteng had returned in Cavite during the holiday season.

Senior Supt. Benjardi Mantele, Cavite police director, strongly belied Remulla's claims but said he would order a probe into the allegations.

Remulla identified a certain Ganu Kupkupin as the maintainer of jueteng in at least five Cavite towns.

He, however, declined to give the names of unscrupulous local officials who tolerated and benefited from jueteng.

Verzosa said he had already ordered the relief of Chief Insp. Conrado Gongon, General Trias police chief, based on the recommendation of PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao for his failure to stop jueteng operations in his jurisdiction.

He said he likewise ordered Mantele to appoint an officer in charge as replacement for Gongon.

One-strike policy

Gongon was the fifth casualty of the PNP's "one-strike policy" against jueteng in Calabarzon.

According to the policy, town police chiefs will be sacked whenever members of the anti-illegal gambling unit are able to prove that jueteng exists in their respective areas.

Five months ago, the police chiefs in Pagbilao, Quezon and Padre Garcia, Batangas were relieved after anti-gambling agents conducted successful anti-jueteng raids in the municipalities.

One of those arrested was Ricky Cortez who confessed that he was the table manager of jueteng in the area.

He admitted in a television interview that they revived the underground lottery in Cavite last Jan. 2.

Cortez, however, said what they had was not an organized, full-blown jueteng operation as alleged by Remulla but a small-scale, guerrilla-type one. **Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**



POLICE gather some of the 46 men who were arrested for "jueteng" in Cavite. All of them were bet collectors, indicating that their operators and masterminds are still at large.

Going organic seen way to compete with imported veggies

By Donna Demetillo
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—ORGANIC FARMING is the way to go if local farmers are to compete with the rush of imported produce into the country brought about by the World Trade Organization, according to Dr. Rogelio Colting, president of the Benguet State University (BSU) here.

Colting said there is a growing market for organically grown fruits and vegetables with more and more people becoming conscious of

their health.

In fact, because of the high demand for organic food and insufficient supply, organic products rake in more income for a handful of organic farmers.

"In 1983, Baguio cabbages were sold at P35 per kilo in Davao while organic cabbages were sold at P65," Franco Bawang, BSU vice president, said.

Colting said: "Organic farming could save the vegetable industry in the Cordillera. There is a market. People are becoming conscious of what they are eating. But we lack

farmers who are willing to go organic."

BSU will hold the first Cordillera organic agriculture Congress on Jan. 13-14 as part of the campaign to convince more farmers to shift from conventional farming to organic farming.

BSU will also launch its organic university program, a consolidation of university-wide efforts towards organic farming, on Jan. 9.

The program is a response to the global concern on environmental degradation and food contamination caused by harmful chemicals.

It aims to establish ecologically safe concepts through organic principles and practices.

To demonstrate the concept of an organic university, seven healing gardens will also be opened on Jan. 9 at the BSU compound here.

"This is a group of small gardens—of flowers, vegetables, salad crops, herbs, fruits, cactus, and a pond where people can draw positive energy and experience some kind of healing," said Marlene Atinyao, dean of the College of Agriculture and chair of the Task Force on Organic University.

Bohol town prepares for burial of Filipina soldier slain in Iraq

By Jhurnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—SGT MYLA MARAVILLOSA is coming home to her hometown in Inabanga, Bohol on Wednesday but it will not be a happy reunion.

Her mother, Estelita, with local and school officials would be at the airport in the capital city of Tagbilaran to welcome her back.

The United States Army will bring her remains so she could be buried next to the grave of her grandfather in Barangay U-og in Inabanga town.

Inabanga Mayor Josephine Socorro Jumamoy said Estelita and her sisters Lorie Lumayag and Bernarda Lumayag-Rodriguez came home from Hawaii last Sunday, three days ahead of the scheduled arrival of Myla.

She would fetch her daughter at the Tagbilaran airport, which would be brought in at about 11 a.m. by the US Army plane from the military base in Delaware.

"We, the town and provincial officials headed by Gov. Erico Aumentado will be there at the airport to fetch her remains," she added.

Officials of U-og Elementary Schools and Holy Spirit School where Myla completed her elementary and high school education, would also receive her at the airport.

The mayor was not sure if the US plane would make a stopover in Manila or go directly to Tagbilaran from a military base in Delaware.

Myla and her mother had moved to Hawaii in the 1990s when Myla was only 16 and had just graduated from high school. She later went to serve in the US military.

An only child, Myla was killed on Christmas Eve when her Humvee was hit by rocket-propelled grenades in Iraq.

Jumamoy said Myla's relatives had agreed to bury her at the barangay cemetery in U-og, Inabanga, on Jan. 19, nine days after her arrival on Wednesday.

US military officials were expected to arrive in Inabanga next week for Myla's burial where she would be given full military honors, said the mayor.

Aumentado said they had prepared the burial site of Maravillosa.



OUTDOOR CLUB

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.'s Outdoor Club (POC) made its way to Morong, Batangas to distribute Christmas gifts to 77 Aeta families. Led by POC head Jesus Casabar, the mountaineering group distributed used clothes, shoes, candles and other goodies to the tribal people.

Trader, wife, daughter found dead in Iloilo home

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—AN ILONGGO businessman, his wife and their 6-year-old daughter were found stabbed dead inside their house at dawn yesterday.

Francisco "Bobby" Tan suffered multiple stab wounds in the chest when he was found sprawling in the master bedroom on the second floor of their residence along M.H. del Pilar Street in Molo District.

Bodies

The body of his wife Cynthia Marie Zayco-Tan was found in an adjacent bedroom and their

daughter Kathy, near the door of the master bedroom. Both also had stab wounds in the chest.

Tan is owner of Crown Agro Chemical, which sells pesticides, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs. Cynthia belongs to the prominent Zayco clan in Negros Occidental and is the niece of the province's vice governor, Izidro Zayco.

Unharm

The couple's five other children and Tan's aunt, businesswoman Conchita Tan, were unharm

The victims' remains were discovered by Tan's sons from a pre-

vious marriage Archie, 23, and John Michael, 19, said Chief Supt. Doroteo Reyes II, Western Visayas police director, quoting the statement of Tan's sons.

Archie and John Michael told investigators they sneaked out around midnight yesterday for a night out by jumping over the concrete fence.

Discovery

They said they returned around 3 a.m. and found the remains of the victims when they returned to their rooms.

They immediately called the other members of the household who helped bring the victims to the hospital.



ONE OF the pet dogs of the Tans roams in the victims' home in Iloilo.

ARNOLD ALPACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

IF A WARDS
ARE YOUR
AMMUNITION
THIS IS

Tanauan folk hold vigil to back mayor

TANAUAN CITY—MORE THAN 700 SUPPORTERS of embattled Mayor Alfredo Corona trooped to the City Hall grounds here late Sunday night and held a vigil in anticipation of a supposed order of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to vacate his post in favor of the incumbent mayor's rival in the last elections.

The protesters, led by the Kalipunan ng mga Tanaueño Para sa Tunay na Tinig ng Tao (Katapat), accused election officials and Sonia Torres-Aquino, Corona's rival, of conniving with each other to reverse the results of the last elections.

Katapat is made up of seven people's organizations with about 5,000 members.

Aurelio Lianto, Katapat chair, assailed the Comelec decision and described it as a farce.

He said they went to the City Hall as news spread that Torres-Aquino would seat as the new Tanauan mayor after the Comelec allegedly issued a writ of execution.

"We are not here to support Mayor Corona but to defend our right to choose and be heard. The people of Tanauan know who really won the elections. We just cannot accept the Comelec's decision (favoring Torres-Aquino)," Lianto said.

The writ would have enforced the Dec. 22, 2005 ruling of the Comelec's second division, which said Torres-Aquino won by 3,102 votes over Corona after a revision of the ballots.

The local election board had Corona winning by 3,741 over Torres-Aquino.

Both ran under the administration party Lakas.

As of 3 p.m. yesterday, at least 400 supporters of Corona were still at the City Hall grounds as if to guard the mayor who stayed at his office the whole day.

Despite the rally, operations at the City Hall remained normal, said administrator Norberto Mendoza.

Corona filed on Friday a motion for voluntary inhibition and the disqualification of Election Commissioner Rufino Javier for his "indecently sudden and anomalously abrupt vote" which favored Torres-Aquino.

Javier had concurred with Commissioner Meho. Sadan's 465-page resolution a day after his appointment to the division on Dec. 20, 2005.

Commissioner Florentino Tuazon issued a separate 110-page dissenting opinion favoring the incumbent mayor.

In his motion, Corona urged the election body to prohibit Javier from further participating in his election case, which is now on appeal.

He noted that it was very obvious that Javier's decision was an uninformed and arbitrary one, and was never based on the merits of the case.

"How can Javier study the almost 600-page decision of the two other commissioners in just barely two days?" Corona said. *Marion Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Security tight for Asean meet

DAVAO CITY—AUTHORITIES HERE ARE EXPECTED to be more stringent in security measures, following reports of possible terrorism attacks during the week-long Asean Tourism Forum (ATF), which is scheduled to start this week.

"We have identified some personalities whom we suspect to be in the city," said Mayor Rodrigo Duterte during his Sunday TV program.

He said authorities have monitored terrorist elements prowling in the city and are now being hunted.

"There is a specific threat... And we just have to face it," the mayor said.

Duterte said he even ordered the police and military to take "preemptive steps."

Some 2,000 foreign delegates are expected to be in the city for the ATF, a yearly summit of foreign ministers in the Asean with legislators and businessmen in tow.

Although the ATF would significantly boost the image of the city as a tourist and business haven, it's been a security nightmare for the authorities.

Denuris Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau



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10 suspects in Dacer slay case enter not guilty plea

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TEN SUSPECTS IN THE ABDUCTION and killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in November 2000 were arraigned yesterday morning at the Manila Regional Trial Court on double murder charges.

Wearing faded yellow detainee T-shirts and grim expressions on their faces, SPO4 Marino Soberano, SPO3 Mauro Torres, SPO3 Jose Escalante, SPO1 Ruperto Nemen, and PO2 Thomas Sarmiento Jr. pleaded not guilty to the charges filed against them in the courtroom of Judge Myra Garcia Fernandez.

The five policemen were formerly assigned to the disbanded Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).



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The other suspects, Crisostomo Purificacion, Margarito Cueno, Renato Malabanan, Jovencio Malabanan and Rommel Rollan, also pleaded not guilty. The five were former agents of the task force.

Brothers Jimmy and William Lopez, and Alex Diloy, who were among the accused but were later

included in the Witness Protection Program, also appeared during the proceedings. Judge Fernandez set the formal preliminary investigation for the case on Feb. 6 and 13.

In a 24-page decision issued on Oct. 10, 2005, the Supreme Court ruled that former Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino should be included as a respondent in the killing of Dacer and Corbito.

Aquino, a former PAOCTF official, is detained in the United States on conspiracy charges. He was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation last September.

The high court, however, said Supt. Glenn Dumlaog, who had linked Aquino and several others to the crime, should be excluded as an accused.

The decision, penned by Associate Justice Mineta Cluco

Nazario, affirmed a ruling of the Court of Appeals to include Aquino in the charge sheet for the double murder case.

Earlier, the appellate court overturned a Manila Regional Trial Court ruling, which junked the "amended information" of the Department of Justice that sought to include Aquino in the case.

Also charged in the amended information were Senior Supt. Cesar Mancao, Senior Supt. Teodoro Vina, SPO2 Allan Villanueva, SPO4 Benjamin Taladua, SPO1 William Reed, SPO1 Mario Sarmiento, SPO1 Rolando Lacasandile, Chief Insp. Vicente Arando, Insp. Roberto Langcaon and Digo de Pedro. Langcaon died in jail while Vina was gunned down in Tanza, Cavite, in 2003. The others remain at large.

METROBRIEFS

Street kids' haven

A HAVEN for street children and battered women has been proposed by the Marikina City Council to serve as a temporary shelter as they wait to be reunited with their families. "We want an environment that would be conducive especially for the street children," said Legal Affairs Coordinator Deanna Racquel De Jesus of the Vice Mayor's Office.

Based on a city ordinance passed last year, policemen and government officials can take custody of street children and bring them to the City Holding Center. The facility, however, is also a full-scale rehabilitation center for drug dependents and is therefore "no longer an adequate environment for the temporary housing of street children," according to the resolution introduced by Councilor Lea Carlos. But will the city government have enough funds for the proposed project? "This is the right time to tackle this social concern. Passing a resolution urging our city government to undertake this project would be the first step towards the realization of our goal," De Jesus said. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Boy recovers from meningitis

THE 4-YEAR-OLD boy who was diagnosed with meningococemia in Marikina City last week is on his way to "full recovery," doctors said. Amang Rodriguez Medical Center (ARMC) Director Ricardo Lustrero told the INQUIRER yesterday that the boy's attending doctors at the San Lazaro Hospital had told

them the patient could be discharged "probably this week." Lustrero advised city residents not to take a fever for granted as this could be a symptom of a more serious illness, like meningococemia.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Alias 'Palos' nabbed

THE FORMER wife of a suspect accused of attempted murder, who could no longer stomach his criminal activities, alerted police to his presence which led to his arrest yesterday. Arrested was Alexander Guhit, alias "Palos," (suspicious) of Dagat-Dagatan, Caloocan City. Guhit had been accused of stabbing several people without any provocation. After each incident, the suspect would disappear. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

QC launches intensive drive vs TB via 'Sagip Baga'

By DJ Yap

MORE THAN 60 YEARS SINCE TUBERCULOSIS claimed the life of President Manuel L. Quezon, the city named after him is still grappling with the killer respiratory disease.

In a bid to control TB by 2015, the Quezon City government yesterday launched "Sagip Baga Quezon City," a nine-year campaign seeking to educate the public about ways to fight the fifth most common cause of death among residents.

It will be an uphill battle. As many as 15,000 Quezon City residents are believed to be afflicted with tuberculosis or TB, with 7,500 new cases reported every year, according to the city health office.

Half of the figure, or about 3,500 cases are highly contagious, said city chief health officer Maria Paz Ugalde, citing figures from the Philippine Coalition Against Tuberculosis.

In turn, a person with a highly contagious case of TB may infect between five and 10 people every year, she added. Quezon, the first Commonwealth president, died of the disease on Aug. 1, 1944.

To help prevent the spread of the deadly disease, Quezon City has teamed up with the Department of Health, the Lung Center of the Philippines, and several public and private organizations, for Sagip Baga, a comprehensive anti-TB program.

At the launching of the program yesterday at City Hall, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said that TB remains a big threat to the public, even though there is a mistaken perception

that the disease is no longer prevalent.

Although the disease is both preventable and curable, two factors stop infected patients from being cured, Belmonte said.

The first is the stigma attached to the disease, he said. Many people are ashamed to admit they have TB, because they do not want others to start avoiding them, he added.

"They do not consult a doctor, and before long, they will have infected their own children," Belmonte said.

The second factor is the mistaken belief that the disease can be cured by self-medication, Belmonte said.

TB can be cured if patients simply go through the whole treatment regimen and continue medication for about six months, depending on the severity of their condition, the mayor said.

Many people, however, often stop taking their medicine once they begin feeling well, he said. When the disease resurfaces, it will have become immune to normal medication, thus, patients end up spending up to P200,000 for treatment, Belmonte noted.

TB is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, or bacteria that are transmitted through airborne droplets from the cough or sneeze of infected persons. If left untreated, it can lead to a disabling condition and even death.

According to Ugalde, the city health office can only detect and assist less than 1,300 cases, and successfully cure 1,000 from the large pool of TB-infected persons, based on 2004 data.

Reclaimed land brings windfall to Parañaque

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PARAÑAQUE CITY GOVERNMENT is optimistic that its recent acquisition of a parcel of land from the Public Reclamation Authority (PRA) would give residents a range of investment possibilities and more revenues for its coffers.

The 1.5 has of land was recently accepted by the local government as the PRA's (formerly Public Estates Authority) initial payment for tax liabilities worth more than P737 million from Jan. 1, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2005.

Resolution 331 was approved by the city council last month, ratifying and approving the compromise agreement between the city and PRA represented by its general manager, Teodorico Tagunod, to settle the agency's real property tax

arrears by paying in kind. The reclaimed land includes the 5,266 sq.m. Fishermen's Wharf in Barangay La Huerta and the 9,937 sq. m. property across Barangays Bacalaran, Tambo and Don Galo.

"This is a major breakthrough for our city," said Mayor Florencio Bernalde in a statement. "I am pleased that through sheer diplomacy, we were able to convince the PRA to settle its taxes, even on a partial basis. I can assure you that these lands will be put to good use."

The mayor assured his constituents that the lands would be converted into revenue-generating areas for residents and the city coffers. Half of Fishermen's Wharf would be converted into a tourist attraction and a profitable fish port, the statement read.

"We will clean and renovate the

area and encourage residents to invest in business in the area," Bernalde said. The resolution, meanwhile, said that the remaining tax arrears worth P436 million would be paid in kind after the city and PRA have identified and agreed on the properties and the corresponding value.

The attempt to collect taxes from the PRA was a controversial issue during former Mayor Joey Marquez's term. At that time, the city government threatened to confiscate and auction off certain reclaimed lands to force the government-controlled corporation to pay its tax obligations.

A case was later filed by the agency against city officials to stop them from confiscating and selling the reclaimed land. The case is pending in the regional trial court.

Corruption caused the Sampaloc tragedy

THE FIRE THAT DESTROYED A BOARDING-house at the University Belt in Manila and killed eight persons, mostly students, was a tragedy waiting to happen.

The blame should be placed on the laps of the following offices: the license division and the office of the building administrator of the Manila City Hall, and the Manila fire department.

Had those offices or agencies been true to their jobs, Sunday's tragedy would not have taken place.

Almost all the boardinghouses at the University Belt are virtual death traps.

Mostly made of wooden materials, these boardinghouses are old and dilapidated. When fire breaks out, it spreads fast.

Boarders are packed like sardines in these dormitories. A room is divided into cubicles with double or triple decks inside each cubicle.

On top of all these, most houses at the University Belt don't have fire exits or ladders. And if they do have fire exits or ladders, the windows leading to the fire exits are padlocked and the keys are kept by the landlady or landlord.

Officials and employees of the license division, the office of the building administrator and the fire department periodically inspect the buildings. But the visits are mostly not official, but social (read: collection of bribes).

Of course, there will be investigations and inspections of houses in the Sampaloc area where the University Belt is located. Officials of these agencies will, for the benefit of the media, close down dormitories they consider fire traps.

But after the furor dies down, it's back to normal again, meaning, back to collecting

bribes from owners of the "death traps."

Up to now, the National Bureau of Investigation doesn't have a permanent chief almost a month after the death of Director Reynaldo Wycoco from a stroke.

Nestor Mantaring is director in an acting capacity. Reports say he will eventually be replaced.

There are rumors that an outsider, most probably a police general, may again be at the helm of the country's premier law enforcement agency.

The rumors have sent the morale of NBI agents plunging. They want one of their own to be their chief.

If President Macapagal-Arroyo is averse to having an insider as NBI chief, why not a former insider, say, Orlando Dizon?

Dizon resigned from the NBI to become associate commissioner at the Bureau of Immigration. But he's now out of the immigration bureau.

A Kapampangan like the President, Dizon was respected by his peers at the NBI when he was still in the bureau. He was a "go-getter," meaning he didn't leave any assignment unfinished. And he was assigned the "dirty jobs."

I leave that to the imagination of the readers.

A department head at the East Avenue Medical Center continues to hold on to her post even after she was asked to resign by the Department of Health. An investigating panel has found that the department head made charity patients pay their hospital bills.

Health Undersecretary Jade del Mundo ordered the EAMC head, Dr. Rolando Cortez, to hand the department head the verdict. She was asked to resign to give her a graceful exit and for her to receive benefits.

But Dr. Cortez hasn't given her the notice to vacate. Why?

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Ramon Tulfo



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1 dead in Quiapo fiesta stampede

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A SEEMINGLY HARMLESS manhole caused it all.

The annual Black Nazarene procession in Quiapo, Manila, yesterday was marred by the death of a male devotee who suffered a heart attack during a stampede.

Medical officer Shirley Yabut of the Manila Health Department said the man fell into a manhole with a defective cover shortly before the statue of the Black Nazarene was taken out of the Quiapo Church at 2 p.m.

Yabut said the victim was brought to the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) for treatment after paramedics at the site failed to revive him.

PGH doctors later identified the man as a certain Dante, describing him as "between 42 to 45 years old, and muscular with very short hair."

"Four other devotees tripped over the manhole and were brought to the ambulance for treatment of injuries," Yabut said, adding that the victims were stepped on by other panicking devotees during the stampede.

An Associated Press report, quoting National Capital Region Police Office Director Vidal Querol, said the crowd was trying to get near the Black Nazarene statue when a wooden manhole cover caved in.

Several men, among them Dante, who were standing on the cover fell and were stepped on. It took time before the men,

bloodied and unconscious, were carried out of the jam-packed square in front of the Quiapo Church and taken to a hospital for treatment, Querol said.

20 persons hurt

Manila Police District Supt. Romulo Sapitula said around 20 persons were hurt during the procession.

"While there were only 16 people injured last year, this year's activity was more peaceful because organizers and devotees did not have a hard time taking out the statue from the church," Sapitula said. The police officer said the crowd reached 600,000 at 4 p.m.

An hour before, marching bands simultaneously played party music like "Hawaii 5-0" and "Get This Party Started" while different statues of the Black Nazarene were paraded in streets surrounding Plaza Miranda.

Devotees threw their towels and handkerchiefs at the people in charge of the statues. The "image custodians" would then rub the towels on the statues and throw these back to the crowd.

Barefoot devotees

Hundreds of maroon-clad male devotees also milled around the area.

Pedro Ampo, 67, a Black Nazarene devotee for 12 years, carried an incense holder and a mineral bottle full of incense powder "as perfume for the spirits."



DEVOTEES of the Black Nazarene try to grasp the rope attached to the cart carrying the statue which is believed to have healing powers. The procession yesterday, however, ended in tragedy for a participant.

ENR ARAZAS

"We have been doing this for Jesus Christ, because we believe in Him," said Ampo, who stood barefoot while the pro-

cession passed by. Black Nazarene believers also lined up outside the church, waiting for their turn to kiss the

statue stationed near the altar. "The Black Nazarene is miraculous," Leonardo Lim Sr., 53, declared. He said the figure of

Christ bearing a cross had granted his prayers, including his wish to work abroad and good health for all his children.

2 die in Makati fire; couple in dorm blaze still missing

By Margaux C. Ortiz
 and Tarra V. Quismundo

A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER WERE killed after they were trapped inside their burning house on Diesel Street, Barangay Paganan, Makati City, early yesterday morning.

The victims were identified as Mary Jane Baylon, 37, and Iris, 8. Baylon's husband, Erwin, and her three other daughters, Jamin, 12, Janelle, 10, and Gaby, 3, were able to get out of the house.

As the blaze raged, fire officials yesterday said they were still trying to look for a man and his wife who have been miss-

ing after a fire on Sunday killed eight young people in Sampaloc, Manila.

FOI Guillermo Fernalino said the couple, Ricky and Cherry Aag, were among the occupants of the two-story apartment building at 833 P Campa St.

"But we have yet to confirm if the reports are true," Fernalino said in a phone interview, adding that the bodies of the unidentified victims have yet to undergo autopsy.

He added that building owner Juan Manahan has yet to give a statement to arson investigators.

"We also could not immediately determine the cause because debris covered the ground floor kitchen where the fire

allegedly started," Fernalino said.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has ordered City Administrator Dino Nable to form a panel that would investigate how the building obtained a permit to operate despite alleged violations of safety requirements like fire escapes.

On the other hand, initial investigation showed that the Makati fire began at the ground floor of the Baylon house a few minutes after 4 a.m. yesterday. It quickly spread as the house was made mostly of light materials, said Chief Insp. Rogelio Bucayu, acting fire chief of the Makati Fire Department.

"The survivors said the fire may have begun at the altar, where they left a lit

candle. Initially, that was the cause of fire we are looking at, but this is still subject for further investigation," Bucayu told the INQUIRER.

Nardo said Erwin and his house help, Jessie Banderas, managed to get the children out one by one through a narrow window in the bedroom at the second floor, as the fire raged below.

Victims trapped in bedroom

Unfortunately, the fire spread quickly, engulfing the second floor where Mary Jane and Iris were sleeping.

Their bodies were later found inside one of the bedrooms, burned beyond recognition. Mary Jane was found

crouched on top of her daughter, apparently to protect her, fire officials said.

The two-story house, one of the units of the Baylon family's three-door apartment, was completely destroyed said Bucayu. The adjacent house, separated by a concrete wall from the Baylon house, was partly destroyed. Damages were placed at P200,000.

Yesterday's fire was the first to be reported this year in which there were fatalities. In November, a fire that razed a dozen houses in Barangay Pembo killed Rosana Acas, 35, and daughter Mary Grace, also 8. Like the Baylons, the two died after they were trapped inside their burning house.

Bird watchers' club in urban setting Park launch to highlight Navotas centennial fête

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NURTURING A DREAM TO HAVE a city of bird lovers one day, Makati has formed an organization to look after its winged residents and visitors.

The Makati Bird Watchers Club (MBWC), organized by the city's Department of Environmental Services (DES), seeks to enlist residents' support in turning Makati into a bird-friendly city.

"All that is required is one's interest. What we want the club to become is a government-initiated group that would eventually be run by private individuals as a non-government organization (NGO) working for the protec-

tion of birds and the conservation of their habitat here," said DES Parks and Green Division chief Moises Camacho, the head of the project.

The MBWC was formed in line with a Makati ordinance that declared the whole city a bird sanctuary.

The ordinance penalizes "hunting, shooting, snaring and capturing" birds, the illegal trade of wild birds, harvest of bird eggs, and the destruction of nests and areas known to be their habitats.

"This would serve as a community-based, school-based organization that would be part of our implementing arm for the ordinance... a watchdog which would

report to us sightings of birds, illegal bird trading, and other acts prohibited by the ordinance," Camacho told the INQUIRER. He said the organization would encourage members to create "backyard bird sanctuaries," lots planted with trees and other greens conducive to bird habitation.

The club has yet to be formally launched although it hopes to recruit members from the public and private sectors, businessmen, students, even out-of-school youth.

"It would be run by volunteers engaged in bird watching activities, among others," said Camacho, a member of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines.

By Nancy C. Carvajal

NAVOTAS, THE COUNTRY'S fishing capital, will mark its 100th founding anniversary on Jan. 16 through a series of activities from Jan. 10 to 16.

The highlight of the centennial celebration will be the opening and inauguration of the municipality's newest landmark—the Navotas Centennial Park at C-4 Road, Barangay Bagumbayan North.

"The inaugural ceremony also marks the leaders of this town's

continuous struggle for progress," Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said in a telephone interview.

The coastal town, which has 14 barangays and a population of over 250,000, was declared a separate town from Malabon in 1906.

Among the activities for the centennial celebration with the theme, "Navotas Maunlad na Bayan sa Senternaryong Pagdiriwang," are a historical parade, a job and trade fair, a motorcade and a calisthenics competition.

On Jan. 11, town officials will launch a book on the town's history titled "Navotas: Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas," at 7 p.m. at the municipal hall.

Medical mission

The Centennial Mutya ng Navotas coronation night will be held on Jan. 13 followed by a medical and dental mission the following day.

On Jan. 15, there will be a variety show and a fireworks display during the inauguration of the centennial park at 7 p.m.

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XTRA

'Ten or more sports' eyed for Olympics

By Musong R. Castillo

THE HUNT FOR THE FIRST Philippine gold in the Olympics can go beyond 10 sports after all.

Focus on what sport can achieve that break through for the country can go even wider after a series of meetings starting late this month among officials of the Philippine Sports Commission, the Philippine Olympic Committee and the various National Sports Associations.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez, after a meeting with sports patron and First Gentleman Jose M. Alzate, yesterday said the next three months will be crucial in locking off the hunt for the elusive Olympic victory.

Ramirez said the rest of this month will be devoted to consultations with the NSAs and the POC before the identification of the Olympic sports in February.

"The identification of these sports will depend heavily on the potential of the athletes," said the head of the government sports agency who also welcomed the prospect of Michael Keon being re-appointed as Asiad national training director.

This will be followed by pinpointing the places where the athletes will train, as well as the formulation of strategies and the raising of a budget to fund the undertaking.

The First Gentleman is also scheduled to start in March a new fund-raising program for the 16th Asiad in Doha, Qatar, in December, which could very well gauge whether or not the country is ripe to win its first Olympic gold.

"He (Arroyo) has the same passion and intensity to raise funds for Doha," Ramirez said.

Arroyo raised a total of P160 million last year which helped fund the training of athletes and exposed them to competitions overseas.

Incidentally, Ramirez has been invited by Sen. Manuel Villar to appear before the finance committee on Jan. 17 to explain the PSC's budget.

TEW/A20



McGrady hospitalized
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Hingis gets a reality check /A19

WHAT'S INSIDE
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St. Scholastica, San Agustin off to hot starts

TITLEHOLDERS COLEGIO SAN AGUSTIN AND St. Scholastica's College got off to rousing starts Sunday in the 11th Women's Volleyball League (WVL) at the San Beda College gym in Alabang.

Elementary Competitive defending champion Colegio San Agustin beat Diliman Preparatory School, 25-5, 25-8, to kick off its campaign in the tournament organized by Nic Jorge's BEST Center and sponsored by Milo.

Equally impressive was St. Scholastica's which survived a tough first set before trouncing PARER-Rosehill High School, 25-21, 25-19, in High School Developmental play.

St. Scholastica's came back from an 8-10 deficit to build a 15-10 edge in the second set.

In other matches, host San Beda College-Alabang clobbered Stella Maris College, 25-11, 22-25, 15-8, and St. Paul Pasig defeated St. Niño Catholic School, 25-16, 25-14, in the High School Developmental.

In High School Competitive, SBC-Alabang whipped Poveda Learning Centre, 25-12, 25-15, while School of St. Anthony downed UP Integrated School, 25-15, 25-20.

Former national coach Florentino "Kidd" Flores, the WVL commissioner, expects the competition to be tighter this year.



AMAZING FORM: Player of the Week Mike Cortez

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Aces find new Johnny A in Mike Cortez

By June Navarro

SINCE JOHNNY ABARRIENTOS LEFT ALASKA, the Aces have been looking for someone who could fill his shoes.

Mike Cortez wasn't even close, but he displayed shades of the young Abarrientos in the 1990s when the Aces took Game 1 of their best-of-three wildcard series with the Sta. Lucia Realtors in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference Sunday night.

Cortez saved the Aces from the brink of disaster in regulation and in the first overtime, before finishing off the Realtors with a drive off a pick-and-roll during the second extension period.

It reminded everybody how Abarrientos won several down-the-wire games for the Aces in 1996, the year he became the league's smallest MVP after leading Alaska to a rare grand slam.

The 5-foot-7 Abarrientos was traded to the now-defunct Pop Cola Panthers in 2000 after helping the Aces capture nine of their 10 PBA championships. Now playing for Coca-Cola, Abarrientos was absorbed by the Tigers when the RFM-owned franchise left the PBA in 2001.

Just like the Abarrientos of old, Cortez took over when needed in Game 1. He fired a career-high 27 points, nine in the final extra session, while import Odeil Bradley and the disqualified Jeffrey Cariaso watched from the sidelines.

Bradley leads the Aces in scoring with 25.7 points per game while Cariaso's 13.1 points a

night makes him the team's top local scorer.

"He was awesome," Alaska coach Tim Cone said of Cortez, the 2003 No. 1 overall pick. "They (Realtors) couldn't get an antidote (to Cortez), so we just kept on going to him."

For his heroics, Cortez was selected overwhelmingly as the San Mig Coffee-PBA Press Corps Player of the Week.

"This is a good motivation coming into Game 2," said Cortez, who went nine of 20 from the field, converted all of his eight freethrows, and issued eight assists.

Should Cortez and the Aces wrap it up tomorrow, they will advance to the best-of-five quarter-finals against the Red Bull Barako.

Meanwhile, Air21 head coach Bo Perasol has been summoned to appear before Commissioner Noli Eala today, two days after he lost his cool and was ejected after a referee's call on Raniel De Ocampo.

"It was just a spur-of-the-moment reaction, but I believe we really got the raw end of the officiating at that instance," said Perasol after the Express won Game 1 of their best-of-three wildcard series against San Miguel Beer last Sunday.

With nine seconds left and the Express ahead, 79-73, De Ocampo tried to pry the ball loose from Danny Seigie in a rebound play. Referee Throngy Aldaba whistled a defensive foul on De Ocampo, and Perasol flared up in protest.

Perasol got a double technical foul and was thrown out.

US oddsmakers pick Pacquiao

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—MANNY Pacquiao and Erik Morales took center stage at the MGM grand for the first time last March, displaying their status as two of the world's most powerful super featherweights to millions of fans.

On Jan. 21, the rivals reprise their bloody encounter in "The Battle" at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas with Pacquiao favored by the oddsmakers to prevail this time over Morales, the Mexican they call El Terrible. The "Pacman" starts on Monday the final

phase of his rigorous sparring at Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

After hearing Mass Sunday, Pacquiao tapered off from his usual grind and was looking with keen anticipation at what his sparring partners can bring to the dance in the final phase of his training.

The Filipino boxing hero is scheduled to proceed to Las Vegas on a motorcade next Monday.

"Pacman is so loose," according to one of his fans Sunday. He was with a group of Fil-

ipinos salivating at the prospect of an exciting evening at the T&M Center.

A quicker ending is anticipated by both camps owing to the thinness in the knuckle area of the Cleto Reyes brand of boxing gloves to be used for the fight. Pacquiao had complained of the Japanese-made gloves in the first fight.

The first meeting went to the gritty Mexican, but the Filipino idol has vowed to clinch a memorable win when they clash anew. *Hermie Ravera, contributor*



PACQUIAO: Early favorite

DOUGLAS J. ABBOTT, #33040

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4968 El Camino Real, Suite 125
Los Altos, CA 94022-1406
(650) 967-1001

Attorney for Petitioner

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

In the Matter of the Adoption Petition of

Samson D. Agbayan

Adopting Parent,

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

To JUSTO S. TABURADA.

YOU ARE CITED to appear at 9:00 a.m. on Feb. 10, 2006, in Department 60 of the above-entitled court, located at 115 Terrace Street, San Jose, California. At that time and place, you must show cause why the petition of SAMSON D. AGBAYAN to adopt your minor child, KACYS LUV F. TABURADA, should not be granted without your consent in the above-entitled proceeding, on the ground that you have abandoned that child. The adoption petition alleges that for a period of one year after April, 2003, you willfully failed to communicate with, and pay for the care, support and education of, the above child although you were able to do so. A copy of the petition is on file with the court.

YOU ARE FURTHER ADVISED that if you appear at the above hearing and wish to have legal counsel but are unable to afford counsel, the court will appoint counsel on your behalf.

Dated: Dec. 8, 2005 Clerk of the Superior Court

By B. Forbes
Deputy Clerk

CITATION TO APPEAR AT HEARING

(PCL - Dec. 28 & 29, 2005 & Jan. 3 & 18, 2006)



Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Metro Manila Development Authority

PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Project Pasig River Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program (PAREMAR)

Loan No. Asian Development Bank (ADB) Loan No. 1746-PH

Description of Works Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from the ADB toward the cost of PAREMAR and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the Contract for Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing.

2. The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) as the executing agency now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the following contract packages:

Contract Package	Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing
Contract No.	Contract No. EPA-RAP-H01
Contract Duration	360 Calendar Days
Project Description	Design, site development and construction of 1,000 units of socialized housing, including the following community facilities: School Buildings, Health Centers, Multi-Purpose Halls, and Health/Day Care Centers. Scope of work shall include the following: architectural works, structural works, electrical works, carpentry works, painting works, sanitary/plumbing works, water supply, site work, site improvement and drainage work, among others.

3. Proposals will be accepted from licensed private developers, GOP enterprises the majority of which is publicly-owned including non-government organizations (NGOs) with demonstrated track record in the development of sustainable communities including social preparation, design and construction of socialized/low-cost housing units employing community-participation and post-relocation capability-building activities. Licensed private developers and NGOs could submit proposals either as individual bidders, individual bidders with subcontractors or as joint ventures. Interested Bidders shall secure the Bid Documents and submit bids as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Securing of (a) Eligibility checklist or (b) submission of Letter of Intent and purchase of complete set of Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 10,500.00	From Jan. 13 to 20, 2006	From 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg, Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City
Securing of additional eligibility information (if any) and inspection of Bidding Documents	From Jan. 13 to 20, 2006	From 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg, Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City
Pre-Bid Conference	Jan. 27, 2006	10:00 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg, Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City
Deadline for Submission of Bids	March 20, 2006	10:00 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg, Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City
Opening of Bids	March 20, 2006	10:30 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg, Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City

- The National Housing Authority (NHA) shall be the implementing agency of the Project.
- Bidding (Eligibility Check/Qualification, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract) shall be conducted on the basis of local competitive bidding among interested Bidders from ADB eligible source countries as defined under the "Guidelines for Procurement by the Asian Development Bank and its Borrowers" pursuant to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with the Asian Development Bank's procedures.
- The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids anytime prior to Contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders.

(Sgd.) BINGLE H.B. GUTIERREZ
Executive Director

Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
2F, MWSS Engineering Bldg., Katipunan Road, Old Balcara, Quezon City 1105
Tel Nos. 433-3444 and 433-3447, Fax No. 929-5234
Email Address: prrc@iti-lays.com
(PCL - January 3 and 10, 2006)

'The Courier'

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY BELIEF that if Mike Cortez is in shape, Alaska would be hard to beat.

It is not every day that we get to see players like Mike Cortez who can deliver the goods when his team needs them most. He did just that on Sunday, shouldering Alaska past Sta. Lucia Realty in a manner only the likes of Superman could. He was so fabulously efficient in carrying Alaska to heights not once or twice but thrice that I am now inclined to christen Mike Cortez "The Courier." As a result of The Courier's explosive game, Alaska moved to within a game of advancing to the next round in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference.

Cortez had been out of commission for weeks, if not months, due to an injury. As a result, Alaska, a tested PBA power through the years, struggled. With The Courier back in harness, the Aces are again scoring the aces they had so horribly missed in the eliminations.

In this particular Sunday outing, Cortez canned the crucial shots in regulation, in the first overtime and in the second extension.

A Cortez drive in the lane in the second overtime was the apex of The Courier's sterling performance



as it shoved Alaska to a 102-101 lead. Alaska would proceed to score a 108-104 victory—a triumph that would go to the books as authored substantially by Cortez, who scored a career-high 27 points.

It was actually a night to remember as Air21 defeated San Miguel Beer in the second game, 97-88, as the Express bucked the ejection of coach Bo Perasol.

Like Alaska, Air21 will advance to the next round should it beat San Miguel Beer anew in the second game of a similar best-of-three series in the wildcard phase.

As I said, the conference format has been drawing raves for its sheer ingenuity since all teams are virtually assured of equal chances of advancing to the finals. In short, the achievers are instantly rewarded—Purefoods got the first semifinal slot with its tournament-best 10-6 elimination record—and the strugglers, if not strugglers, are given

tons of chances to climb out of the pits.

Thus, tomorrow's twinbill should prove to be thrillers anew as San Miguel Beer and Sta. Lucia Realty fight for life.

The Beermen are, indeed, in dire straits, hurtling as they are due to three successive battles prior to tomorrow's showdown with the Express. But as I said, athletes are always supposed to be in shape and the word "burnout" should be stricken off their vocabularies. For example, a boxer cannot say "I am now suffering from 'burnout' and I can't continue fighting anymore" after the 10th or 11th round. A championship fight usually lasts 12 rounds.

San Miguel must forget about burnout, exhaustion, whatever, if it wishes to stay alive. Otherwise, Air21 would be off and speeding to the next round.

As for Sta. Lucia, well, all it has to do is find what our PBA man June Navarro said, "A quick antidote" to The Courier, to force a rubber match. Otherwise, Alaska would advance, maybe unimpeded this time, and make life miserable once more to the title pretenders.

Comments to menfu@pidtdsl.net

Asia's top duathletes vying in Clark meet



SENATOR Pia Cayetano finishes second in the ladies Pro Division of the national duathlon meet in Clark Field last Dec. 18.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS-BOUND duathletes from 10 countries will compete for top honors in the Asian Duathlon Championships slated April 8 and 9 in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Tom Carrasco, president of the organizing Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP), and officials of event host Clark Development Corp. said they expect veterans of the last world meet in Australia, including world-ranked athletes from Japan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China, to vie for the titles in the tough two-day competitions.

Ryan Mendoza, fourth among Asians in the latest International Triathlon Union rankings, leads the

Filipino challenge in the championships.

He will be up against Japan's Tadashi Mori, Mamami Nakamura and Shinji Yamamoto—Asia's top 3 duathletes—as well as against the feared Uzbekis and Kazakhs.

The CDC management said five other international competitions are being planned at the former United States Air Force base this year to boost Clark's reputation as a new venue for sports tourism.

Some 300 duathletes saw action in the fourth national meet, also held at the same venue, last Dec. 18.

Titles in several categories of the bike-run-bike competitions were disputed at the Clark Expo.

Japanese girls spur revival of golf boom

TOKYO—YURI MEGURO USED TO THINK golf was a dull sport for old men.

Just six months after she first gripped a driver, she now regards a round, even on a freezing cold morning, as blissful.

"It's so relaxing. Beautiful greens and fresh air... they help me forget all the unpleasant things of everyday life," Meguro, 33, who works for a clothing company, said.

"You need a little bit of exercise when you get to this age and I found golfing ideal."

Meguro is one of a growing number of Japanese women who have taken up golf, long seen as the exclusive turf of businessmen, and who are reviving the country's \$17-billion golf industry.

Encouraged by the popularity of young women golfers, including 20-year-old professional Ai Miyazato, more women and young players are teeing off as Japan's economic revival prompts increased spending on leisure activities.

Japan, a densely populated country with a land area approximately the same as California's, has some 2,500 golf courses. One in 10 Japanese plays a sport long seen as expensive and geared to the tastes of unhip outsiders.

That has changed in recent years thanks to golf courses being forced to cut fees and renewed interest in the sport, says Japan Golf Association spokesperson Masam. Nakahori.

"We have a solid feeling that more people have started showing an interest in golf or have begun actually playing it," Nakahori said.

He said the number of spectators for the Japan Women's Open reached a record 50,000 this year, more than double last year's total.

Renewed interest in the game helped Japan's largest golf course operator, Pacific Golf International Holdings K.K., on its stock market debut last month.

The company's shares soared 45 percent on their first day of trading in Japan's first initial public offering of a firm devoted solely to golf course management.

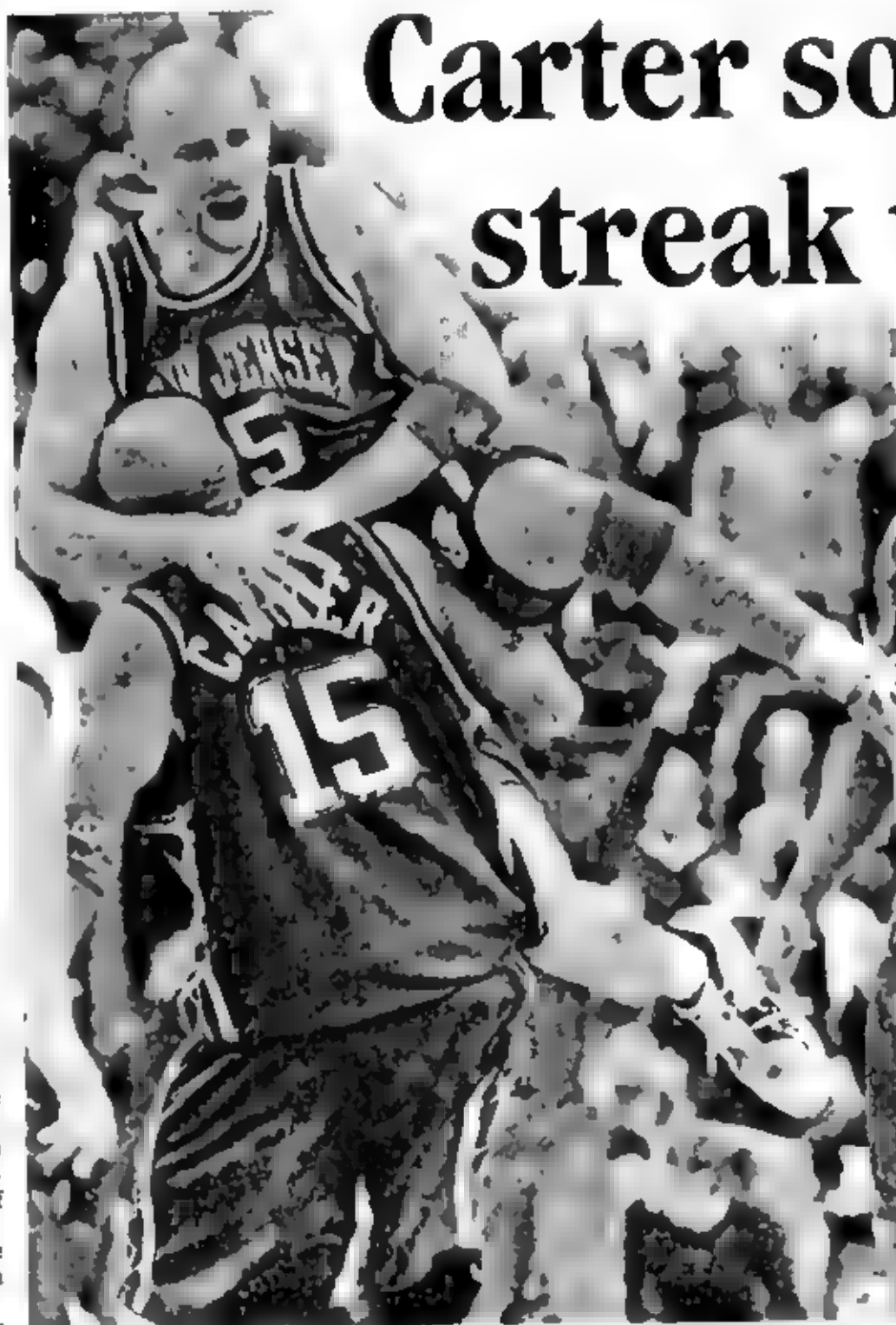
At the height of Japan's bubble economy of soaring stock and land prices in the late 1980s, membership fees at Japan's golf courses soared but the market was hit hard after the bubble burst in the early 1990s.

Nearly 600 golf courses went under with about 13 trillion yen in debt between 1991 and last March, according to golf magazine publisher Iku Publishing.

The economic downturn also cut average spending for an 18-hole round by 26 percent to 14,230 yen between 1991 and 2001.

Many golf courses allowed "visitor" access instead of the traditional membership requirement.

Reuters



NETS' Jason Kidd (top) jumps into the arms of teammate Vince Carter after Carter made a game-winning three-point basket in the last seconds of their NBA game against the Raptors.

Carter soars as Nets streak to 10th win

TORONTO—VINCE CARTER SCORED 42 POINTS, INCLUDING A GAME-WINNING three-pointer with less than a second to play, lifting the New Jersey Nets to a 105-104 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Sunday.

The contest was a showdown between two of the NBA's hottest teams and the win extended the Nets' winning streak to 10 games.

The Raptors were unbeaten in five and looked poised to improve on their mark after taking a 96-90 lead with less than three minutes to play.

But Carter responded with a dazzling 24-point display in the final quarter against his former team, taking charge down the stretch and scoring the final 10 points for the Nets.

Trailing 103-100 with 21 seconds to play, Carter drained a pair of free throws to get the Nets within one until Jose Calderon hit one of two free throw attempts to put Toronto back in front 104-102.

With time ticking down, Carter took the ball four feet beyond the arc and nailed the game winner to silence the crowd at the Air Canada Center who had lustily booed him each time he touched the ball.

"The atmosphere, the emotion and the hostility in this arena... it was a fun game to play in," Carter told reporters.

"It felt like Game seven of the playoffs out there."

The Nets' unbeaten run is their longest since a franchise record 14-game streak in 2004 and has been keyed by an inspired Carter, who has averaged more than 30 points during the stretch.

Jason Kidd also made a major

contribution to the victory, notching 22 points and dishing out 15 assists.

"He (Carter) has been off the charts and there's no better place for him to make a big shot than here," Kidd said.

The only sour note for the Nets was the loss of Richard Jefferson to back spasms early in the opening quarter.

Carter's performance overshadowed another fine effort from the Raptors' Chris Bosh, who scored 27 points and pulled down seven rebounds.

Mike James had 26 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in the loss.

In New York, Stephon Marbury and Maurice Taylor both netted 23 points to help the improving Knicks to their third straight win in a 120-116 decision over the Seattle SuperSonics.

Marbury also had a season high 15 assists for the Knicks and Eddy Curry contributed 22 points.

Ray Allen scored 33 points and Vladimir Radmanovic had a career high 30 points in the loss for the SuperSonics.

Reuters

Complete results

New Jersey 105, Toronto 104; NY Knicks 120, Seattle 116; Denver 92, Houston 80; Indiana 108, Sacramento 83; Miami 118, Portland 89.

SOLAR Sports will air the Seattle-Philadelphia game at 8 a.m. today with a replay at 9 p.m.

McGrady cut down by severe back spasms

HOUSTON, TEXAS—HOUSTON forward Tracy McGrady was stretched off the court and hospitalized on Sunday after suffering severe back spasms during the Rockets' National Basketball Association game against Denver.

McGrady, who has battled back pain throughout his career, missed a jumper at the end of the first half, then immediately grabbed his lower back.

Winning in pain, McGrady leaned forward before collapsing on his back onto the court. He then was placed on a stretcher, wheeled off and taken to a local hospital, as a

precaution, the team said.

McGrady, who is fifth in the league in scoring at 25.4 points per game, had 11 in the first half, which ended with the Nuggets leading 40-37.

He had scored at least 32 in his previous five contests.

The 26-year-old McGrady missed three games from November 5-10 and five more from November 20-26 with back spasms.

At 12-19, the Rockets are in last place in the Southwest Division and were already missing Chinese center Yao Ming, who is recovering from surgery on an infected big toe.



TRACY McGrady is loaded onto a stretcher after experiencing severe back spasms.

AP

Appleby remains Kapalua king

KAPALUA, HAWAII—STUART APPLEBY thought he was cruising to a third straight victory in the Mercedes Championships when a glance at the leaderboard behind the 15th green Sunday gave him quite a shock.

There was Vijay Singh, one shot ahead with the kind of round no one thought possible at wind-blown Kapalua.

"I had no clue how he did that," Appleby said. "I said to myself, 'I can't lose this tournament'."

He had to work extra hard to join some elite company, making two birdies on the last four holes to force a playoff, then beating Singh on the first extra hole with a bunker shot from behind the green that tickled the rim of the cup and left him a 2-foot putt, the most nervous he felt all day.

Singh, whose 7-under 66 was nine shots better than the average score in the final round, left a 100-foot putt about 9 feet short on the par-5 18th in a playoff, then missed the birdie putt to the right. Appleby holed his putt to join Gene Luter (1955-57) as the only players to capture this winners-only tournament three straight years.

"This one was the hardest," said Appleby, who went from a two-shot lead to a two-shot deficit before forcing extra holes. "Obviously, I had to win a playoff against Vijay. He was the hottest player by far."

Appleby became the 15th player in PGA Tour history to win the same event three straight years, and the first since Tiger Woods won the Bay Hill Invitational four straight times starting in 2000.

It was only the third playoff at

Kapalua, but the finish was familiar—Appleby with a yen around his neck, the keys to a Mercedes-Benz and another great start to the season. He held up three fingers when he accepted his trophy, then held out his thumb and pointer, Hawaii's sign that everything is cool.

Singh would not come to the media center for comment.

Appleby won the previous two years by one shot, and both times it came down to the final hole, so it's not as though he breezes his way to victory. But the pressure was on after Singh buried the 16th hole to take a two-shot lead, then recovered from a bogey on the 17th with a simple chip to a foot for birdie on the 18th.

"I had to do something special coming in. I didn't do it, so I had to do it in the playoff," Appleby

said. "Winning the Mercedes is awesome. Winning three times is a dream come true."

Both players finished at 8-under 284, the highest score to win in the eight years the season-opening tournament has been played on the Plantation course at Kapalua.

The Mercedes Championships was missing some of the stars this year as Woods, Phil Mickelson, Retief Goosen and Padraig Harrington all stayed home. Singh and Appleby delivered a sterling show.

Not many imagined Singh would be part of a playoff, starting the final round five shots behind. It was only the second round in the 60s all week, the other one a 69 by Olin Browne in the first round when the wind was but a breeze.

All that remained was to see if Appleby could match him.

AP



STUART Appleby celebrates with daughter Ella and wife Ashley after beating Singh in a playoff and clinching his third straight title in the Mercedes Championships in Kapalua, Hawaii, Sunday.

Ljubicic halts Moya's win run, wrests title

MADRAS, INDIA—TOP-SEEDED Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia clinched the Chennai Open tennis title by stopping Spanish defending champion Carlos Moya's two-year winning streak Sunday.

World No. 9 Ljubicic won 7-6 (6), 6-2 in the title contest against the third-seeded Moya, who had won the title here in 2004 and 2005.

The 31st-ranked Moya squandered a 4-0 lead in the first set tiebreaker and then saw Ljubicic put pressure to break his service twice in the second set.

But before the title contest, Ljubicic scraped past Belgium's Kristof Vliegen 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (6) in the semifinal earlier Sunday that provided a stiffer contest.

The Ljubicic-Vliegen semifinal was disrupted by heavy showers

Saturday night.

Serving 12 aces against Moya's five, Ljubicic dashed the Spaniard's dreams of clinching a title in the year's first week for the third time in a row.

"I feel fantastic at winning a title in the first week of the year for the first time," said Ljubicic, 26, winner of three previous titles and a late replacement for Spain's injured Rafael Nadal.

"It's after a long time that I played two matches in a day, but it helped me. The earlier match gave me the rhythm from the first point in the final," he said.

Moya said the first-set tiebreaker loss hit him hard.

"It was mentally tough," he said. "I had no energy left after losing the tiebreaker in the first set."

AP



JUSTINE Henin-Hardenne hits a backhand during her first-round match against Hingis at the Sydney International Tennis tournament.

Henin-Hardenne gives Hingis a reality check

SYDNEY—JUSTINE HENIN-HARDENNE EASED past Martina Hingis, 6-3, 6-3, in the opening round of the Sydney International on Monday to hand the former world number one her second straight defeat since announcing her comeback.

The Belgian made light work of their much-anticipated clash, cruising to victory in a little over an hour.

"I knew it was going to be a tough first round... but I was probably not at my best today," Hingis told a news conference.

"But I just have to be patient. It's going to take a lot of tournaments, a lot of matches to prepare for things like that."

Lleyton Hewitt overcame a sloppy start and problems with his serve to beat Vince Spadea 2-6, 7-5, 6-3 in the men's draw but former French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero slumped to a 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 loss to Australian wildcard Chris Guccione.

Hewitt chalked up 57 unforced errors and 10 double-faults before his fighting his way out of trouble although all the attention was won the women's draw.

Hingis, who was knocked out of the semifinals of last week's Australian women's hard-court championship by Flavia Pennetta in her first serious tournament in more than three years, showed some fleeting glimpses of her old form but struggled to produce the standard of tennis that saw her dominate the sport in the late 1990s.

"I know what I'm aiming for now. That's the way you learn," Hingis said.

The Swiss had not dropped a set in her two previous matches with Henin-Hardenne—both in 2000—but her lack of match practice was evident on Monday as the Belgian ran her ragged on the Sydney International tennis center's center court.

Reuters

Tribu Sugbu, Valencia cagers forge title showdown

VALENCIA CITY—TRIBU SUGBU AND host Valencia Golden Harvest hurdled their respective rivals Sunday to arrange a grudge rematch for the 5th Day Charter Open Invitational basketball championship here.

The Tribesmen of Lito Gillamac and Mario King crushed Gov. Manny Pihol's North Cotabato Braves, 98-79, while Mayor Jose Galarzo Jr.'s Valencia cagers top-

pled Aqua World-backed Pagadian Explorers, 72-64, in the semifinals of the tournament supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Molten and Prime Channel.

The Skygo/Sirlitz-backed Tribu and Valencia were disputing the crown at presstime last night. The Braves and the Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co were playing for third spot.

Five Tribu players—Doroteo Almacin,

Don Yabut, Christian Nicdao, Ale Calinglet and Bernie Ursat—finished in double figures as the Cebuano dominated the Braves from start to finish.

Juhus Navales' 23-point explosion helped Valencia buck a slow start to turn back the Explorers, who were led by ex-pros Peter Naron and Bong Marata.

Tribu coach Al Solis was confident of winning their second straight Nature's

Spring-NBC pre-season series despite losing to Valencia, 67-70, in the eliminations. The Tribesmen swept all their matches in the first leg of the pre-series in Antipolo.

The scores:
TRIBU 98—Almacin 17, Calinglet 17, Yabut 15, Nicdao 14, Jrsal 12, Caio 8, Ducay 8, Sevilla 5, Luga 4, Butel 0, Bucan 0.

NORTH COTABATO 79—Martinez 17, Reyes 14,

Jawod 12, Cabnon 8, Ligue 5, Bina 6, Clar 5, Coronado 4, Jawod 3, Del Norte 2.

Quarters: 23-14, 47-42, 68-58, 86-79.

VALENCIA 72—Navales 23, Cruz 13, Braga 11, Ayson 6, Taligalos 5, Berami 4, Cabili 4, Numeran 2, Clavel 1, Adams 0, Cesar 0.

PAGADIAN 84—Dala 17, Naron 15, Marata 12, Guldora 5, Sino 3, Isidro 3, Saludos 2, Dayota 2, Valencia 2, Ormandam 0, Ayuk 0, Cortez 0.

Quarters: 15-23, 41-43, 57-51, 72-64.

Asiad may not have seen the last of Mikee

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHEN MIKEE COJUANGCO-JAWORSKI won the equestrian gold medal in the 2002 Busan Asian Games, hardly any Filipino was watching.

The unexpected victory, though, sent a strong statement that—more than just a pretty face and a landed family's princess—Cojuangco-Jaworski took her sport seriously.

But at 31, Cojuangco-Jaworski claims that she's already "semi-retired." And with her cousin, champion equestrienne Toni Leviste now 32, she notes the sport needs more young blood.

"I'm now focusing on teaching and training young riders," said Cojuangco-Jaworski, who, as a last-minute replacement, helped the Philippines capture a gold in the showjumping team event in last December's 23rd Southeast Asian Games with Leviste, Joker Arroyo and Juan Ramon Lanza.

"We need to encourage more young people to get into the sport," she says. "Like (17-year-old) Joker Arroyo, we were training her for the SEA Games and she did very well."

Cojuangco-Jaworski says she wasn't even suppose to compete in the recent SEA Games.

"I didn't train for it," says the veteran rider. "But six weeks before the competition, one of our members had to back out, so I joined the team."

But "coming out of retirement" seems always easy for someone who practically grew up riding horses.

Although quite unusual for girls her age, Cojuangco-Jaworski already showed interest in the sport at 8 years old, even though she only took formal riding lessons when was already 10.

Among her notable achievements were gold-medal finishes in the individual event in the 2001 CSI-B New Delhi and in team events in the 1995 Asia-Pacific Equestrian Games and the 1992 Asian Showjumping Championships in Chinese Taipei. She also bagged the Philippine Equestrian Federation Rider of the Year title in 2001.

Cojuangco-Jaworski's biggest triumph, of course, was her first-place finish with horse Rustic Rouge in the individual showjumping event of the 2002 Asian Games held in Busan, South Korea.

It was the Philippines' first ever gold medal in equestrian in the Asiad. And since that historic win, RP team members are now often tabbed as potential gold-medal winners in regional meets.

So hopes are high again when the Philippines competes in the 2006 edition in Doha, Qatar, this December.

But will the reigning Asian Games champion be back?

"We now have several promising riders in the country," said Mikee, a former movie star and now wife of Pasig Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr., with whom she has two sons.

"But as long as it's for the country, I'm always ready."



SEMI-RETIRED but always ready to answer the call of flag and country is Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, seen here on her way to a stunning victory in the 2002 Asian Games in South Korea. PHOTOFEST

Pava in deep bind for hosting GP legs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

INTEREST IN WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL may have picked up following the staging of world Grand Prix legs here, but the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association is paying a high price for it.

Pava president Roger Banzuela said his association owes the international body (FIVB) \$100,000, or about P5.3 million, representing the bond for the country's hosting of a leg of the women's volleyball GP last year and another GP leg two years ago.

Banzuela has ruled out the possibility of Manila hosting another leg this year, even as he pleaded with the FIVB to give Pava more time to pay its arrears on an installment basis.

"We are not yet suspended," Banzuela told the INQUIRER. "In fact, I was the one who wrote FIVB to give us enough time to pay our account."

Proof of Pava's good standing, according to Banzuela, is Manila's hosting in May of the Asian Women's Club Championships.

The Pava chief said the country failed

to pay the \$75,000 bond for hosting last year's GP, a regular part of the Pava's calendar featuring some of the best women's volleyball clubs in the world.

Pava has also yet to pay a balance of \$25,000 for the GP leg it hosted two years ago.

Banzuela explained that the event's organizers backed out at the last minute last year, while organizers of the 2004 meet failed to get sponsors.

The report that the Pava has been suspended, he added, may have been spawned by his statement of a possible

suspension during the referees congress in Baguio City last Dec. 27.

"I told everybody that we might get suspended, and that's where the whole story came from," said Banzuela, himself a former member of the national team in his heyday. "We are still not suspended but we just might be if we fail to pay up."

He added that FIVB had given Pava six months to settle its obligations.

Interest in women's volleyball perked up after the country hosted the legs of the world Grand Prix.



PAUL Brian Rosario celebrates his victory in individual skeet in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games. EGAY MONTANA

Salute to Filipino SEAG, World Shoot medalists

FILIPINO SHOOTERS WHO CAPTURED medals in the World Shoot XIV and the recent 23rd Southeast Asian Games will be feted by the organizers of the 2006 Defense & Sporting Arms Show on Jan. 12 to 16 at the Megatrade Hall 2 of SM Megamall B in Mandaluyong City.

To be honored for their SEA Games feats are gold medal winners Jun Angeles in practical shotgun, Paul Brian Rosario in individual skeet and Patricio Bernardo, Darius Hizon and Paul

Brian Rosario in the team skeet; silver medalists Dr. Ariel Santos in practical shotgun; Marty Llorito in practical pistol; Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla in rapid fire pistol and the trap team composed of Jethro Dionsio, Jaime Recio and Eric Ang; and bronze medalists Eric Ang and Aimee Gana in men's and women's individual trap.

Filipino shooters who won medals in the last World Shoot XIV held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, were modified division world champion Jethro

"Tag" Lejano, senior production winner Daniel Torreillas, modified division shoot-off champion Nelson Uycongo, revolver class fourth placer Philipp Chua, and the Modified team winner composed of Jethro Lejano, Nelson Uycongo, Lyndon Biraogo and Joseph Edward Sy.

The 2006 Defense & Sporting Arms Show is organized by the Association of Firearms and Ammunition Dealers of the Philippines and managed by TradeShow International Inc.

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Race 2—(Or/Tri)—Control Freak 4, Dream Cross 1, Mojito 3, Sacred Hall 8.

Race 3—(Or/Tri)—Blue Face 1, Hurry Putter 2, Fine Offer 9, Kalashnikov 3.

Race 4—(Or/Tri)—El Cid 5, Kewell 7, Mina Sa Isla 1, Sir Olizon 8.

Race 5—(Or/Tri)—Mini Bambino 8, Kumpulmedo 1, Mercurio 10, Powerhouse 5.

Race 6—(Para/Tri)—Worth It While 8, Take a Strike 12, Uncle 5, Revelation 10, Valentine Dancer 3.

Race 7—(Or/Tri)—Golden Issue 8, Desert Breeze 1, Half Medium 5, Brazen Truth 1.

Race 8—(Para/Tri)—Medius 8, Shy Girl 8, Gambly's Attack 6, Epic Energy 12, Armandan Bounty 10.

Race 9—(SB/Or/Tri)—Lelshaveparty 11, Ichiro 5, Pirouette 1, Rebound 7, Amrin 8, Yao Man 14.

Anand mentor Cabrillo dies
NATIONAL MASTER VICTOR CABRILLO, THE Filipino mentor of former world champion Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand of India, died from a heart attack last Friday. His remains lie in state at the Funeral Oro on G. Tuzon Street near Balic-Balic in Quezon City. Interment will be announced later.

'Ten or more' sports eyed...

From page A17

Before the Southeast Asian Games—which the Philippines ruled convincingly last month—Ramirez said that the 2006 PSC budget was only P27 million.

After the overall romp, Bacolod Rep. Monica Puentevella started lobbying in Congress for a PSC budget of P250 million, an amount which Ramirez said he can defend before the senators.

"We have (prepared) a P250 million detail of expenses," Ramirez said. "We really don't know how much our budget will be (for 2006), but I am very sure that it will not be P27 million anymore."

Meanwhile, national coaches finally received their incentives from the PSC yesterday, while SEAG record breakers Arnel Ferreira (hammer throw) and Henry Dagmil (long jump) will get their additional cash bonuses today.

Long distance runner Eduardo Buenavista, who set a new record in the Vietnam SEAG in 2003, will also get his long overdue incentive.

ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer.ent.rnme/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

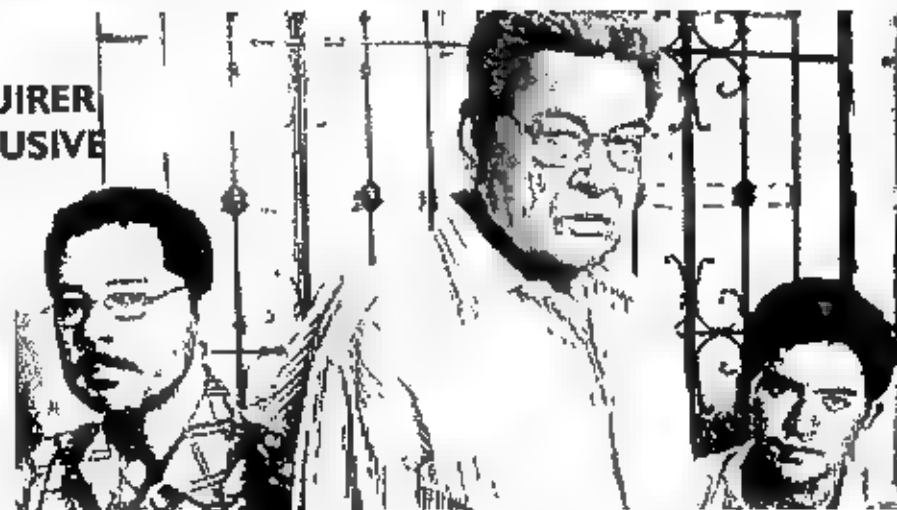
Did You Know...

SOUTH BORDER FANS IN BAGABERDE, PASIG ON FRIDAY WERE stunned when Sharon Cuneta joined the boys onstage. She sang a few lines of "Rainbow," the band's hit from her 2003 movie "Crying Ladies." With a Handycam, Cuneta's daughter KC recorded the impromptu number during Mega's birthday bash held right after the taping of a TV special at nearby Ultra.

Picking MMFF's Most Gender-Sensitive film

By Anna Leah Sarabia
Contributor

FINALLY, the local movie industry is learning about gender. Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte has attached some funding and his good name to make sure people remember that media can promote gender balance. Through its Gender and Development Resource Coordinating Office, the QC government has been giving the Most Gender-Sensitive Film Award during the Metro Manila Film Festival in the last three years. It is probably the only award

INQUIRER
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of its kind in any major film festival anywhere in the world.

Women's NGOs and some women in the media can take the credit for pushing gender issues to the forefront, despite the machismo in government and in the media workplace. As of 2004, it is estimated that

THE MEN of "Blue Moon": It's okay to cry your heart out.

ALWINA, heroine in "Mulawin," is "not a pushover."



MMTA METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION MOVIE GUIDE NOW SHOWING

SHAW CINEPLEX	Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA	EASTWOOD CINEMAS
1 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 3 200m FAMILY STONE 4 200m KING KONG PREMIERE 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 200m ST ANGE 2 200m KING KONG 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m FAMILY STONE 5 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 6 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 7 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 8 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 9 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 10 200m AKO LEGAL WIFE	1 200m FAMILY STONE 2 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 3 200m CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m KING KONG
CINEMA 2000	Blue Wave	CINEMA 2000
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US 4 KING KONG	1 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 200m KING KONG 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US	1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 3 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 4 200m EXODUS
starmall	MARAGANA CINEMA	CINEMA 2000
1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m NARNIA 3 200m KING KONG	1 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 3 200m KING KONG 4 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2	1 200m KING KONG 2 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 3 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 4 200m KING KONG
METROPOLIS	Center Mail Cinema	Lianas Cinema
1 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 2 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 3 200m KING KONG 4 200m NARNIA	1 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 200m KING KONG	1 200m KING KONG 2 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 3 200m KING KONG 4 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2
AKO LEGAL WIFE	Jade Cinema	Lianas Cinema
1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m AKO LEGAL WIFE 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m KING KONG	1 200m EXODUS 2 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2	1 200m KING KONG 2 200m EXODUS 3 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 4 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US
Cine Nepo	Cine Nepo	Fiesta World Mall
1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m AKO LEGAL WIFE 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m AKO LEGAL WIFE 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 3 200m KUTOB 4 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US
Cine Nepo	Centre Plaza Cinema	Berna Cinema
1 200m DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2 200m AKO LEGAL WIFE 3 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 4 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	1 200m ENTENG KABISOTE-2 2 200m SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL	1 200m EXODUS 2 200m THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

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4: Narnia
5: King Kong

1: Enteng Kabisote 2
2: Don't Give Up On Us
3: King Kong
4: Narnia

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about 70 percent of Filipinos have become aware of women's rights. The challenge is how to make this come across naturally in movies.

In "Enteng Kabisote 2," the hero has to promise his wife, the fairy princess Faye, that he will treat her as an equal partner in battle so that he can join her in the fight against Satana. In the end, however, she and her female fairy family—with all their powers—still rely on the mortal man and his half-fairy son to help save Engkanta from male demons. Why does the man villain have to be female? So that Magenta and her sister can show off their powers. Plus, it would be un-gentlemanly for traditional Enteng to fight a woman, even if she's Satana.

A male hero, in order to be deemed thoroughly manly, should have a worthy male opponent, just like Exodus has Haring Bagu-bol. Of course, he succeeds in his first quest to tame four elementals—two females, plus a male child and a

PICK-NG/A3-2

FROM ACADEMY AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR PETER JACKSON

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KING KONG

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NOW SHOWING NATIONWIDE

Shame on show biz folk!

JUST ASKING

Kristine Hermosa was spotted waiting impatiently for someone at Starbucks Morato on Wednesday night. After an hour or so, a gorgeous guy joined her, a dead-ringer for her ex, Diether Ocampo. Maybe it was just coincidence, or does Kristine have a Diet hangover?

Is it true that Luis Manzano asked Pauleen Luna to send feelers to GMA 7 that he wants to become a Kapuso? He is said to be smitten with GMA's pretty young things—Jennylyn Mercado, Nadine Samonte and Katrina Halili. Perhaps he said that in jest to Pauleen since she was a "Kapamilya" like him before she made the big switch. Besides if Luis really wants to win the "puso" of any of the Kapuso girls, he can easily do so. The battle of the networks does not preclude in-

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal



ter channel romance or is there an unwritten rule about that?

Zsa Zsa Padilla and Dolphy were the picture of a happy couple when he escorted her as she received her Metro Manila Filmfest Best Actress award for "Ako Legal Wife." Wouldn't it have been cute if at the end of her acceptance speech Zsa Zsa turned to Dolphy and asked, "So, when will I be your legal wife?"

Not again!

As a true child of show busi-

ness, I am saddened by the bickering over the Metro Manila Film Festival 2005. Here we go again. What a way to start the Year of the Dog Biting... fighting like "askals"... howling. Are we just gonna let show biz go to the dogs?

I grew up in show biz, a world I've learned to love because my mom spent the best years of her life in it. That's why when something shakes up the biz, it hits me where it hurts. Times like this, I wish my mom were still around to help me make sense of the madness. I can almost hear her say one of her original lines, "Sa gusot, may lasot."

Through this column, I want to give something back to the business that sent me to good schools and put food on our table. In my own little way I hope I can be a conduit, a mirror and a bridge. The faces I see fighting on TV (Mother Lily, Tita Annabel Rama et al.) are the same faces I've seen up close laughing with my mom. They all love this business as

fiercely as I do, I'm sure. So aren't we all supposed to be on the same side? True as it sounds, we should stop fighting with each other and instead fight for each other.

The MMFF has become a Pinoy Yuletide tradition. Every Christmas Day, moviegoers spend a portion of their holiday bonus to watch the entries, to patronize local movies to the exclusion of all others. Shame on us show biz folk for making the public's support seem vain!

Thanks, Aga

Got a text from my dear friend Aga Muhlach about my previous column, "26 wishes for RP show biz." His message: "You said it right, my friend. Tama talaga." If I may add, I wish more show biz folk were like Aga. His heart is really for the biz and what's good for it. No need for awards to prove that. Cheers to you, "Morn'ng!"

(E-mail: wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com)

Scene stealers a



AIAL De Las Alas' "Ako Legal Wife" headdress.



MAKE OR BREAK HAIR: Young Mariz Ricketts; rush-out-with-a look for winner Cherrie Pie Pica.



MATINEE idol-handsome Mark Fernandez.

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1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40

FAMILY STONE

2:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40

NARNIA

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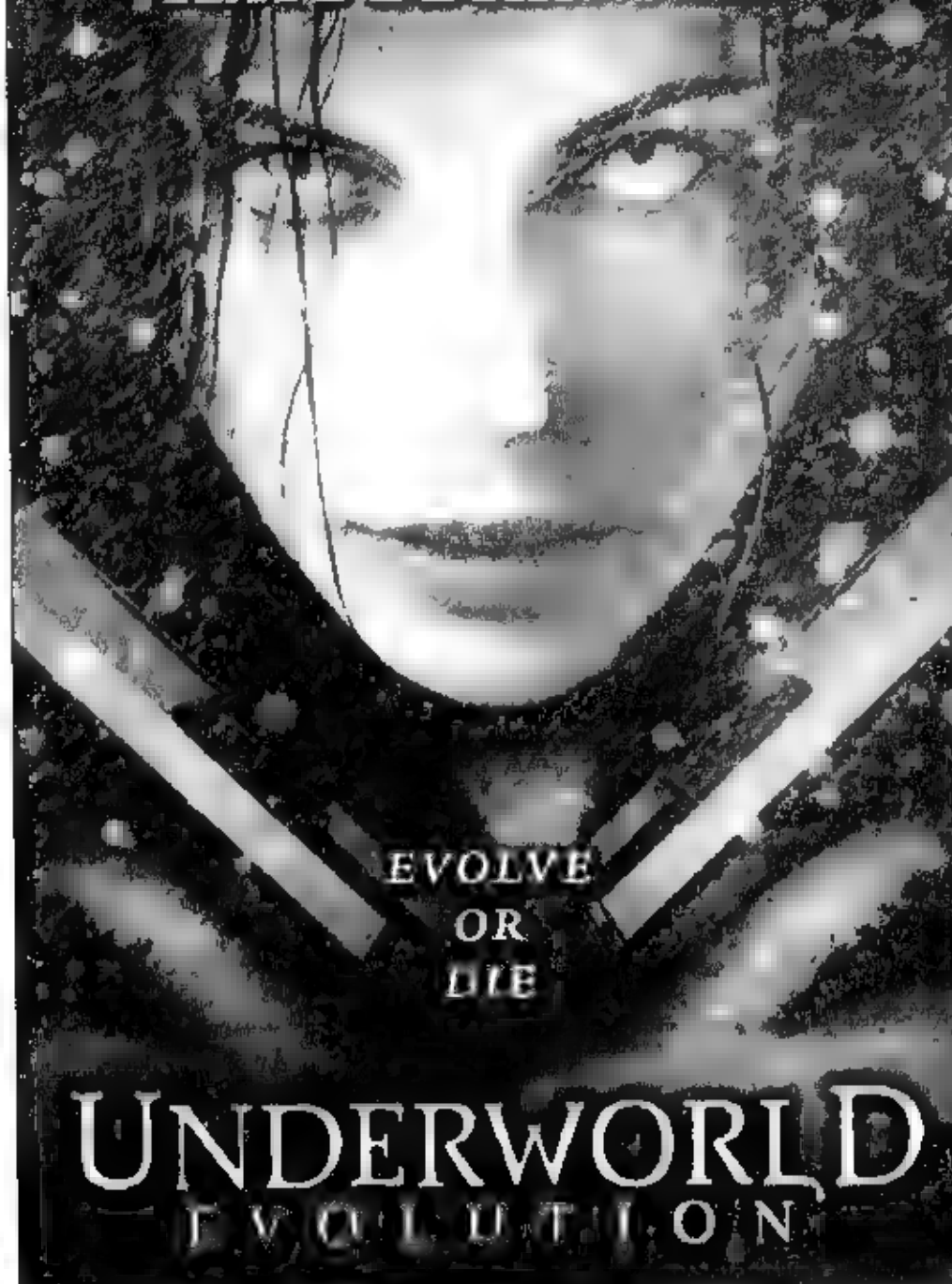
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Picking MM

male centaur—and they pool the powers to help him save the humanity of Bantayan from ogres and demons.

"Terrorist Hunter" has an elderly soldier and his team of five men and a woman, on a mission to rescue the daughter of a general from kidnappers for ransom terrorists hired by Aryan-looking man in an Araneta headdress.

Better attitude

"Mulawin" has a much better attitude towards men and women, this case he birds and she-birds. Although the directors and writers couldn't help playing up the role Aguiluz, Alwina is no pushover. In order for her to join him in saving the Mulawin race, she makes Aguiluz accept the other he-bird that she's about to marry. They enlist the help of Tres Aves, two males and one female, who are known for their unusual strength and power.

Unlike in "Enteng," "Exodus," "Terrorist," the fight scenes in "Mulawin" are more androgynous, more stereotyping and macho than in "Enteng."

In the films where more women take center stage, the judges for award wondered why, with such experienced and eloquent actors leading roles, treatment of the characters was a most misogynist. For one "Ako Legal Wife," for the "Mano Po" series, was such a disappointment coming after last year's entry, which almost tied with "Ashitaka" for Most Gentle. Sensitive P. m. "Legal Wife" tries to be a satire on the dishonesty of ranged marriages. But it ends up laughing at women's struggles to survive the trauma of men's lies, fidelities and abuse, making much how they compete for the affection, attention and money of men. "Mourning Girls" makes women's times look even more ridiculous.

Wink-wink

The question to ask is whether such films actually promote co-

at MMFF awards



INJUSTICE, she cried. Lily Monteverde's triumphant smile would vanish before the night—no, the hour—was over.

DARK horse Rica Peralejo wins in the sparide department.

PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONG

boy cut for
no-rollers
the



Anthony **BARBIE** Almabiz did not win anything.

FF's...

From page A2-1

binage and adultery. They make light of women's tragic situation, and wink as their husbands pursue sexual conquests. We wonder, how would today's directors treat a woman philanderer?

And just as cat fights are used to color stories of playboys, the screams of women victims and the cackling of female villains—no matter how comic—have been the stuff of local horror films. We wonder how a sensible female director would treat fright films.

"Kutob" was a powerful production, with winners for Best Actor, Best Editing and Best Director. The lead and supporting actresses portrayed their characters credibly. The downside is, the cause of Lemuel's psychosis: blame is laid at the doorstep of his controlling old maid aunt. Couldn't the writer have been at least a little more scientific if he has to pull out another hateful woman stereotype?

No, the comedies and horror entries were not too funny for women.

Why 'Blue Moon'?

This is why "Mulawin" almost stood out as first runner-up, and "Lagot ka sa Kuya Ko," for all its fragile story line and forced anti-drugs and anti-smoking inserts, still came in a distant third.

How did the jurors rate this year's wardee, "Blue Moon"? In the words of Mayor Belmonte: "This film grapples with the issue of masculinity in Philippine society, masculine relationships that are seldom shown in [local] cinema. It affirms that... it is okay to cry your heart out, to show and accept your vulnerabilities, and to search for your soul. The film alone... understands why [some] women have to leave [the people] they love in order to recover the souls that they may have lost in fusing with the other."

(Anna Leah Sarabia, founder and executive director of the Women's Media Circle, was one of five jurors for the Most Gender-Sensitive Film award.)

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FAMILY STONE PG13 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10	CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP 2:00, 5:00, 8:00	CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
KING KONG PG13 2:40, 6:20, 10:00	DON'T GIVE UP ON US PG13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	CHRONICLES OF NARNIA GP 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 888-14401

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quizon City

FAMILY STONE 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13	CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30 GP
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 2:10, 5:10, 8:10, 11:10 GP	KING KONG 12:40, 4:20, 8:00, 11:00 GP

For inquiries call 687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA MTRCB GP 12:30 3:30 6:30 9:00PM	3 FAMILY STONE MTRCB PG-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
2 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA MTRCB GP 1:50 4:40 7:30 10:20 LMF	4 KING KONG MTRCB PG-13 11:00 2:40 6:20 10:00 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE 3 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
MTRCB GP 12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30 LMF

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1 NARNIA GP	2 KING KONG PG13
3 FAMILY STONE PG13	4 NARNIA GP
5 NARNIA GP	

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JANUARY 22, 2006 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.
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Megamall: 633 901 Manila: 5239240
Fairview: 4176811 Pampanga: 9637681
Southmall: 8066858 Cebu: 2313876

GUARANTEED SEATS

THE PODIUM 633-9976

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 11:15F, 1:45M, 4:05P, 6:30P, 8:55P 08:30LFS, 09:00LMP, 11:35END	2 KING KONG 12:40P, 01:10M, 08:00LFS, 08:30LMP, 11:40END
MEGAMALL	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 11:00P, 1:10:45M, 3:30P, 5:55P, 8:10P, 10:35P 07:30LFS, 08:00LMP, 10:35END

CEBU (032) 231-3876

1 KING KONG 10:50P, 11:00M, 12:30P, 3:00P, 5:30P, 8:00P, 10:30P, 12:55P	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA 12:00P, 12:30M, 3:00P, 5:30P, 8:00P, 10:30P, 12:55P
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 11:20P, 11:30M, 01:30P, 3:00P, 5:30P, 8:00P, 10:30P, 12:55P	

SM MEGAMALL

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 EXODUS	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 FAMILY STONE	6 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	7 ST. ANGE	8 AKO LEGAL WIFE	9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	10 KING KONG	11 MULAWIN THE MOVIE	12 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY STA. MESA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 MULAWIN THE MOVIE	7 FAMILY STONE	8 EXODUS	9 BLUE MOON	10 ST. ANGE
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SM CITY RIGOTAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM VALENZUELA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY BAGUIO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 KING KONG	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM MOLINO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY CEBU

1 KING KONG	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE	5 BLOOD FIST	6 EXODUS	7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	8 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
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SM CITY ILOILO

1 EXODUS	2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	5 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	6 KING KONG	7 BLOOD FIST	8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
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SM CITY DAVAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 KING KONG	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 EXODUS	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

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SM CITY BAYAN

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	4 KING KONG
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SM CITY BAYAN

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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 EXODUS
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SM CITY MARILAO

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SM CITY BAYAN

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SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 BLUE MOON
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SM CITY BACOR

1 ST. ANGE	2 FAMILY STONE	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	5 KING KONG	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	7 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	8 EXODUS
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SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 EXODUS	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
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SM CITY LUCENA

1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
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SM CITY BATANGAS

1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	3 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
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2 The Chronicles of NARNIA	7 BLUE MOON
3 ST. ANGE	8 EXODUS
4 THE FAMILY STONE	9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	10 AKO LEGAL WIFE

ERMITA 538-7808 to 12

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE BLUE MOON	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 ST. ANGE	4 THE FAMILY STONE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 EXODUS	7 KING KONG

METRO EAST 852-5198 - 852-5199

1 KING KONG	5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 THE FAMILY STONE	6 EXODUS
3 The Chronicles OF NARNIA	7 The Chronicles OF NARNIA
4 ST. ANGE	8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

NOVALICHES 835-3221 / 835-3228-30

1 KING KONG	5 BLUE MOON
2 The Chronicles OF NARNIA	6 The Chronicles of NARNIA
3 THE FAMILY STONE	7 EXODUS
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

ICISQUARE MALABON 288-2576 PIONEER 487-5378

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	1 The Chronicles OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	2 ST. ANGE
3 RESERVE	3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 RESERVE	4 THE FAMILY STONE

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Cinema 2 The Chronicles of NARNIA	Cinema 6 NARNIA
Cinema 3 THE FAMILY STONE	Cinema 7 EXODUS
Cinema 4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	Cinema 8 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

STAR ROSA 837-0807 LIPA 757-3884 / 757-3878

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 The Chronicles of NARNIA	2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 KING KONG
4 KING KONG	4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

DASMARINAS 852-2125 / 416-4332 ANGELES 882-2348

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 MULAWIN the MOVIE	2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 The Chronicles of NARNIA	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	

IMUS 875-3838 / 471-8180 STARMILLS 875-1027 / 881-5278

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 EXODUS
3 EXODUS	3 KING KONG
4 ST. ANGE	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
5 THE FAMILY STONE	5 The Chronicles of NARNIA
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 The Chronicles of NARNIA

BACOLOD 441-0453 / 441-0458 ILOILO 338-8878

1 The Chronicles of NARNIA	1 The Chronicles of NARNIA
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 The Chronicles of NARNIA	3 EXODUS
4 KING KONG	4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 EXODUS	5 The Chronicles of NARNIA
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US	6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

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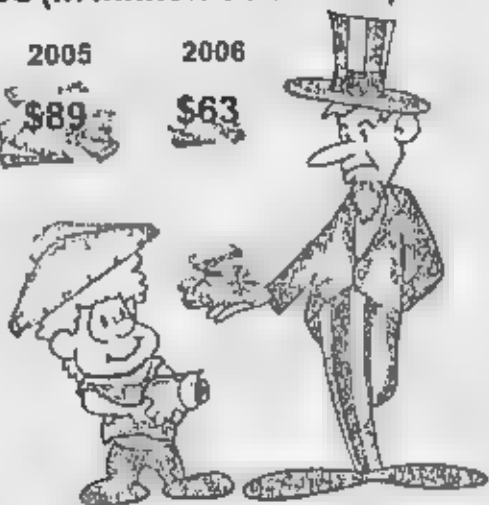
Treasury rejects all bids for 91-day bills

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

USAID Assistance to RP

2004-2006 (in million US dollars)



Source: US Agency for International Development - Philippines
THE US Agency for International Development assistance program aims to support the country's social and economic development. For 2006, the USAID has earmarked \$63 million for the Philippines. Of this 34 percent will go to family planning and health programs. This year's amount is 42 percent lower than last year's \$89 million.

Chona Galang PDI Research

Bids for 6-month, 1-year paper swell

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT REJECTED ALL BIDS FOR the 91-day treasury bills but raised its borrowing through the other maturities as market appetite veered away from the three-month debt instrument following the drop in its yield to the 4-percent level last week.

Had the Treasury accepted the bids for the 91-day bills, the rate could have increased by 14 basis points to 5.101 percent. The decision to reject all bids for the bellwether 91-day bills kept the rate at the previous week's 4.961 percent.

The market was relatively not interested in the three-month government securities, with tenders reaching only P1.16 billion. Although the amount of tenders was higher than the govern-

ment's offering of P1 billion, National Treasurer Omar Cruz said it still showed under-subscription for the 91-day bills considering the high level of market liquidity.

But to maintain the government's programmed borrowing of P3.5 billion a week through the issuance of treasury bills (P1 billion each through the 91- and 182-day bills, and P1.5 billion through the 364-day paper), the

TREASURY/B2

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.48 = \$1

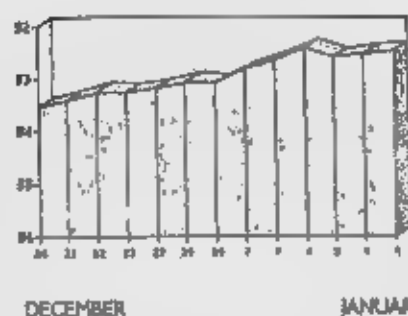
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 9, 2006

Y 116.10 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 6, 2006

GOLD: \$527.80-\$528.30

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 6, 2006



STOCK MARKET

Shares close at 10-month high

SHARE PRICES closed 0.81 percent higher yesterday, hitting a fresh 10-month high as regional markets welcomed the prospect that the US interest rate cycle is near to peaking out, dealers said.

They said sentiment was positive on an improving fiscal and economic outlook but there may be some consolidation this week as most stocks are beginning to become expensive.

The composite index rose 17.36 points to 2,151.15 after trading between 2,133.79 and 2,152.55. Yesterday's finish was the best since March 19, 2005, when the index ended at 2,157.14. Volume was 366.8 million shares worth P814.8 million.

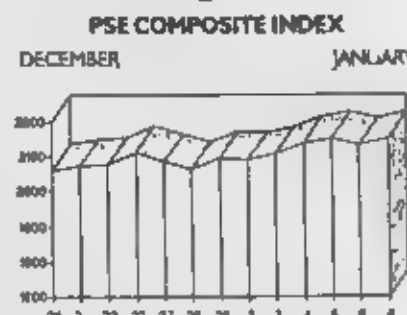
The broader all-shares index gained 7.92 points to 1,012.72.

Gainers led losers 46 to 27, with 48 stocks unchanged.

"Foreign funds are buying into key index (stocks) with strong earnings forecasts. They expect these firms' positive earnings performance to continue this year," said James Lago of Westlink Global Equities Inc.

Dealers said a stronger peso, coupled with tamer inflation in December and slowing liquidity growth, signal more stable and maybe lower interest rates this year.

This should be good for banking and property issues, they said. AFP



(See stock market report on Page B2)

EARLY 'RE-PRIVATIZATION' SEEN

Gov't names 6 to Maynilad board

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY NAMED SIX nominees to the 12-member board of Maynilad Water Services Inc. in a bid to speed up the privatization of the cash-strapped utility that supplies water to Metro Manila's west zone.

The nominees were Oscar I. Garcia, who will also be designated chair once Maynilad elects a new board on Thursday, former Justice Perla J. Tirona, lawyers Gerardo R. Cabochan, Santiago T. Gabonza Jr., Felipe C. Sapio and Rommel Macas Cancio.

Maynilad president Florentino Estuar will also be nominated by the government to the board, while Maynilad's French partner Suez Lyonnaise will name four nominees led by Jacques Lerondot.

"This advances the rehabilitation of the company five years ahead of schedule," government corporate counsel Agnes De-

vanadera said in an interview.

She noted that this would be advantageous to the government as this would make way for the re-privatization of the west concession at a much faster pace.

"The new board nominees will be formally elected on Thursday and the very first agenda (of the new board) is the approval of the recommended financial adviser (ABN-Amro), which will draw up the terms of reference of the re-bidding," Devanadera explained.

The Privatization and Management Office wants to complete the terms of reference for Maynilad's re-bidding by June.

The OGCC chief also reiterated that there would be no new money to be invested by the national government.

Maynilad needs P2.3 billion in capital ex-

penditures this year to further curb systems losses and generate more income for the west concessionaire.

The capital expenditure requirement would come from internally generated funds mostly from earnings and tariff increases obtained in 2005, Estuar told the INQUIRER in another interview.

"The higher capital expenditure program level not lower than P2 billion has historically resulted to lower NRW (non-revenue water) levels. This is what we are aiming at to fully make the company financially viable," Estuar said.

NRW, which is the measure of water systems losses caused by pilferage and busted pipes, could only be improved with corresponding improvements in a concessionaire's system, he noted.

Maynilad targets to narrow down its NRW by at least 2 percent annually. For 2006, the NRW target of Maynilad is at 64.5 percent.

BSP sees 5% rise in foreign investments

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE PHILIPPINES CAN ATTRACT \$940 MILLION worth of net foreign direct investments this year, or 5 percent better than the estimated net inflow of \$896 million in 2005, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas projected.

FDI flows represent investments in brick-and-mortar businesses that are usually capital- and labor-intensive such as those spent in building new factories, power plants, mining ventures or other enterprises.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters that the expected FDI this year would likely go to the power, manufacturing and telecommunication sectors.

These would jumpstart or beef up foreign investments in local enterprises and corporations or tie-ups with local companies, he noted.

While the actual yearend figures were not yet available, the \$896 million in expected net FDI level for 2005 was in line with the BSP's \$900-million forecast for the year.

The expected privatization of power-generating plants owned by the government as well as the Supreme Court's ruling that fa-



GUINIGUNDO

vored the entry of foreign investors in the mining sector were seen as catalysts in attracting more foreign investments.

Business process outsourcing is likewise a booming industry in the Philippines, with big multinational corporations shifting some of their backroom operations such as call center requirements to the country to take advantage of its English-speaking workforce.

But despite a much improved economic environment, the latest forecasts made by the BSP represented a downscaling of the earlier \$1.2-billion net FDI target for 2006 made in October last year.

Although more FDIs are expected this year

BSP/B2

Shell to start selling gasoline with ethanol blend this year

By Abigail L. Ho

FULFILLING ITS COMMITMENT TO JUMP on the alternative fuels bandwagon in 2006, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. has confirmed its intent to start importing ethanol within the year.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Shell had already expressed its desire to take part in ethanol importation this year, particularly with the incentives that came with bringing the alternative fuel into the country.

EO 449 reduces the tariff on ethanol imports from 10 percent to 1 percent as part of government efforts to encourage the use of alternative fuels.

Since there would be no locally produced ethanol until 2007, Lotilla said the best way to encourage bio-ethanol fuel development and use now would be to reduce import duties on ethyl alcohol.

New player Seaoil Petroleum Corp. has already started selling gasoline with a 10-percent ethanol blend straight from its pumps.

Shell country chair Edgar Chua earlier said that they have conducted studies on the feasibility of selling ethanol pre-blended gasoline directly from its pumps and that the actual selling should start this year.

Before selling the product, however, he said Shell should first look at all aspects that could possibly affect its business and even its consumers.

He explained that ethanol, because of its chemical composition, need special care in storage and handling.

Ethanol required proper handling, he said, particularly if the product would be imported. It should not come into contact with water as this would affect its composition.

He added that ethanol could not be placed in just any ordinary storage tank. The storage facility should be made of mild steel.

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DOF to resurrect tax evasion programs

Oil firm seeks to increase biodiesel fuel sales

By Abigail L. Ho

INDEPENDENT OIL FIRM FLYING V plans to invest in more pumps that will dispense alternative fuels, hoping to increase the share of its coco methyl ester (CME)-blended diesel to as much as 40 percent of total diesel sales this year.

Flying V chair Ramon Villavicencio said biodiesel in 2005 accounted for between 15 and 20 percent of the oil firm's total diesel sales.

Of this total, 10 percent came from motorists converting to biodiesel from ordinary diesel, while another 10 percent came from new business.

"We hope to get biodiesel to account for 30-40 percent of our diesel sales this year," Villavicencio said. "Right now, Flying V is the only oil firm selling (CME)-blended diesel at the pump. But we also have ordinary diesel to give consumers a choice."

At present, he said there were 32 Flying V stations that were selling CME-blended diesel in the country.

The oil firm has more than 120 stations nationwide.

Villavicencio said Flying V planned to invest in more pumps that would dispense CME-blended diesel.

In 2006, Villavicencio said 70 percent of its stations, or about 84, should have such dispensing pumps.

Each pump and tank for CME-blended diesel costs around P800,000, he said.

In an earlier interview, Villavicencio said Flying V would be investing between P150 million and P450 million for the establishment of three new depots over the next three years.

A new depot in Poro Point, La Union, with a capacity of four million liters, should be ready for use within the first quarter.

Another one, currently being established in Cebu, should be completed some time this year.

The company would also be putting up a depot in Cagayan de Oro, which should be finished by next year, Villavicencio said.

Each depot, he said, cost between P50 million and P150 million, depending on the capacity, which ranged from 2 million liters to 10 million liters.

Flying V currently has five existing depots, with a combined capacity of 12 million liters of fuel.

Teves vows to spend more time on RATE, RATS, RIPS

By Michelle V. Remo

THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT SAID IT would resurrect its campaign to go after tax evaders, smugglers and corrupt government workers to plug revenue losses.

"I want to spend more time on them (RATE, RATS, RIPS) this year than what I have done in the last five months," said Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

The RATE (Run After Tax Evaders), RATS (Run After the Smugglers), and RIPS (Revenue Integrity Protection Service) programs were launched during the time of Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, who served from February to July last year.

Under the programs, the DOF together with either the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, filed high-profile tax evasion or smuggling cases every week and corruption cases once every two weeks.

The programs were part of the government's campaign to encourage the public to religiously pay taxes and duties.

The weekly and fortnightly schedule for the filing of cases, however, was missed following the change of leadership last July.

But newly appointed Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr., who replaced Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan, said he was tasked by Teves to revive the three programs and make them part of the DOF's agenda for 2006.

"We are looking at certain efforts to preserve the RIPS program. As soon as we have evidence, we will file as many as we can," Mendoza told reporters.

He added that the concerned BIR and DOF authorities were studying ways to improve the presentation of evidence against suspected tax evaders to make RATE cases progress quickly.

On the RATS, he said the DOF wants to pin down big-time suspects rather than focus on small-time ones.

Some big names charged with tax evasion under the old RATE program were celebrities Richard Gomez, Judy Ann Santos, Regine Velasquez, former Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, doctor Joel Mendez, columnist Tina Juan and basketball star Asi Taulava.

Garci tapes are fake

(Second of a series)

RANDY DAVID DISAGREES with my analysis (in my column of Dec. 19) that, except for the chat between the President Arroyo and a Comelec official (presumably Garcillano), the rest of the Garci tapes are fake.

I had written that technology equipment and expertise are available in Metro Manila for taping the voices of two real people engaged in a conversation that never took place.

David says, a voice authenticator can tell us if the voices in the tape match the voiceprints of a given sample of voices. The voiceprints may match with a given sample of voices, but that is no proof that the conversation took place.

David says a recording technician can ascertain the physical integrity of a piece of recorded material. It can be safely assumed that the Garci tapes have physical integrity but, again, that is no proof that the conversation took place.

David calls my analysis absurd. He relies on hermeneutics and ethnomethodology. These long words are not found in my insurance dictionary. So, I looked them up in Webster's unabridged dictionary.

Hermeneutics is "the science of interpretation and explanation, especially that branch of theology which defines the laws applied by exegesis." Exegesis means "exposition; esp., a critical explanation of a portion of Scripture."

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto G. General

Some science. After centuries of applying hermeneutics on God's word, there are today 3,000 (and counting) different versions of the Bible in publication, and 30,000 Christian sects all over the world.

Ethnomethodology is the "sociological study of the rules and rituals underlying ordinary social activities and interactions." That is some mouthful. I prefer to rely on the pure logic of mechanical engineering and stay in the mundane business of insurance brokerage.

Of course, I realize that interpreting God's word is infinitely harder than decoding the Garci tapes.

Even then, I prefer the explanation of my grandson Paco. He is a sophomore in digital illustration and animation (DIA). This is a four-year diploma course offered only by the Ateneo de Naga University. Not even the University of the Philippines offers this highly specialized course.

About seven years ago, the late Father Raul Bonoan, then president of the University, sent a member of the faculty to the Seattle headquarters of Microsoft to study DIA.

When he came back, he designed and developed the course. It is the hardest and most expensive course in the

campus. But money will not get you into the program. Artistic talent and aptitude will.

Paco tells me that with the rising demand for digital animators, the University has decided to expand and improve its DIA facilities.

There is an annual contest among digital animators held in Manila. Pitted against teams from UP and St. Benilde, the Ateneo de Naga team has run away with the grand prizes two years in a row.

The digitalized special effects you sometimes see on Jay Leno's Tonight show and in the movies (King Kong is the latest example) are the products of digital animators.

Paco tells me that, with limited equipment, he and his classmates sometimes fool around in their spare time to produce tape recordings of the authentic voices of two real people engaged in a conversation that never took place.

If the boys have enough recordings of David's voice, I guess they can produce a tape of a fake conversation with Garcillano.

You can't detect the fakery except by the same electronic equipment that produced the fake tapes. This method needs the least amount of human intervention. The results are surefire and exact.

If David is game, I can bring him to a place in Metro Manila where the equipment has been operating for some time. And I am putting a case of pale Pilsen on the line.

Quedancor wants P8.1B set aside for farmers, microentrepreneurs

By Christine A. Gayllan

STATE-OWNED AGRICULTURE AND MICRO-finance lender Quedancor Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor) yesterday said that it would expand its loan portfolio by another P2.4 billion to P8.1 billion this year to reach out to more rural borrowers and microentrepreneurs.

Nelson Buenaflor, Quedancor president and chief executive, said that the state-run firm would be working closely with local government units, as well as commercial and development banks, to meet this goal.

Buenaflor said Quedancor would again be issuing bonds in the capital markets, in compliance with Presidential Decree No. 717 or the Agri-Agra law.

In 2004, the United Coconut Planters Bank and the First Metro Investment Corp. were the lead arranger and issuer of the bond issuance.

In 2005, the East-West Bank availed of a re-discounting window from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to acquire P100 million in debt papers from Quedancor.

Over the last two years, Allied Banking Corp., the Philippine Veterans Bank, the government-owned United Coconut Planters Bank and Land Bank of the Philippines opened similar credit re-discounting windows with Quedancor.

In acquiring the debt papers of Quedancor's farmers, the banks in effect complied with the law's requirements that they "invest in the

agriculture sector and agrarian reform-related projects," Buenaflor explained.

Quedancor will, in turn, use the funds to issue non-collateral loans to thousands of small farmers, fisherfolk, food retailers and rural and urban poor borrowers nationwide.

Quedancor serves as the banks' conduit for lending and collection, he added.

Buenaflor reported that as of December 2004, Quedancor's total lending portfolio stood at P5 billion. For 2005, the state-owned firm hopes to provide some P5.3 billion for its lending activities and P438 million for guarantees.

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 Q/F TRINITY BLDG., 626 T.M. KALAW ST., ERMITA, MANILA
 ☎ 527-7342 ☎ 527-404 ☎ 527-4357 Fax: 528-1113
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 ☎ 542-4501 ☎ 542-4502 ☎ 542-4503 Fax: 542-4504
 e-mail address: make_classification@inquirer.com.ph

OBITUARIES

The Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic
 wish to announce the entrance into eternal life of
Sister Marie Lorraine Carney, M.M.
 At the Maryknoll Sisters Center in New York
 on January 6, 2006

She taught at Maryknoll College Grade School
 and was principal of St. James Academy, Malabon.

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"In peace I shall both lie down and sleep,
 for you alone, Lord, make me secure..."
 (Psalm 4:9)

Judge NATIVIDAD F. IGNACIO

Peacefully joined our Lord
 on January 8, 2006 at the age of 85.

Her bereaved family, relatives and friends request
 the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her
 soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 5, Garden of
 Memories Memorial Chapels, Bagong Calzada,
 Pateros, Metro Manila

Interment is tentatively scheduled on Thursday,
 January 12, 2006 at Tipas Catholic Cemetery after the
 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass



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 Manila: 711-6931 to 35

Atty. Antonio G. Dumiao	Chapel A-1, Q.C.	01/10/06; 8:00 a.m.	Holy Cross Mem. Park
Justice Cecilia Palma	Mt. Carmel Church	01/20/06; after the 1:00 p.m. Mass	Loyola Mem. Park Marikina

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

DR. NESTOR MERCADO FELICIANO

President of Misamis University

wish to express our profound gratitude
 for the spontaneous love, sympathy and support that all of you
 have shown during our time of grief.

We are humbly grateful and find strength in knowing
 that he touched so many lives in his concern for others.

He will continue living on in our hearts and through the lives
 we lead – a testament to his legacy of love, compassion,
 humility and generosity.

Thank you very much

Wife Sonia
 Sisters Natividad and Gloria
 Children Becky, Wendy, Karen, Dina, Raoul and Dario
 In-laws, grandchildren and other relatives

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
 Matthew 11:28

CLASSIFIEDS



PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY

7th Floor LEGASPI TOWERS 200, PASEO DE ROXAS
 CITY OF MAKATI, METRO MANILA
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 817-5017 • 817-5018 • 817-5019 • 817-5014 • 817-5015
 FAX: (812) 815-1462 • 815-2660 • 817-3127

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

- The PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY (formerly Public Estates Authority) is inviting all interested parties to prequalify and bid for the lease of twelve (12) pre-selected sites for outdoor billboard advertising along the landstrip of Coastal Road from Barangay Tambo, Parañaque to Barangay Ilaya, Las Piñas City
- Qualified Bidders
 - Any Filipino citizen, of legal age, and
 - Any partnership, association or corporation, public or private of which at least 70% of the capital stock or of any interest in said capital stock belongs wholly to citizens of the Philippines and which is organized and constituted under the laws of the Philippines.
- Interested qualified parties may obtain the Terms of Reference and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND PESOS (P3,000.00) in cash or Manager's/Cashier's check starting December 22, 2005 until January 24, 2006 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Marketing Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
- The first pre-bid conference is scheduled on January 18, 2006 at 2:00 PM at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor, Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City
- Required pre-qualification documents and duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to the PRA Res. Estates Bids and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on January 25, 2006 on or before 1:00 PM. Public opening of bids shall follow at 1:30 PM of the same day.
- For further information, inquiries may be made to the Marketing Department in the above address at telephone numbers 817-4711 to 13 (toll-free) and 813-7104 (direct line)

(Sgd.) TEODORICO C. TAGUINOD
 General Manager/CEO

(PCA-Dec. 18, 19, 20, 2005; Jan. 5, 10 & 18, 2006)



SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

Western Visayas Cluster
 Bacolod City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE

JANITORIAL SERVICES

Two-year Janitorial Services for SSS Western Visayas Cluster

- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM WESTERN VISAYAS CLUSTER through its 2005-2007 Building Maintenance/Repair-Janitorial Services, intends to apply the sum of P40,000,000.00 for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Two-year Janitorial Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Janitorial Services - (Cleaning, Dusting, Sweeping, Mopping, Polishing, etc.) in SSS Western Visayas Cluster, at Bacolod, Negros Occidental. Bids shall be received until January 11, 2006 at 11:00 AM (PST) at the Social Security System, Western Visayas Cluster, Bacolod City. Bids received after the deadline shall be rejected.
- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) A, of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and its amendments. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the lowest calculated and responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
- Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, Western Visayas Cluster, Bacolod City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P10,000.00. The method of payment will be on a cash basis, payable at the SSS Cashiering Section Ground Floor SSS Bacolod Branch Bldg. upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on January 27, 2006, 2:00 p.m., at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SSS Bacolod Branch Bldg., Lacson Street, Bacolod City.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 5:00 p.m. of February 10, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in Cash or Manager's/Cashier's check payable to the Social Security System amounting to P10,000.00 (1% of ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid opening shall be on February 10, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SSS Bacolod Branch Bldg., Lacson Street, Bacolod City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders.

The Secretariat
 Bid and Awards Committee - WV Cluster
 Administrative Section
 2nd Floor SSS Building
 Lacson Street, Bacolod City
 Tel. (034) 709-0850, (034) 435-0181
 Facsimile number - (034) 434-5130

(Sgd.) ATTY. MA. ELENA M. LACSON
 BAC-WV Chairperson

(PCA: Jan. 18, 2006)

More workers put up own business in 2005

EMPLOYMENT IN 2005 WAS marked with the rise in self-employment as more workers started their own business enterprises last year, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) today said.

A report of the Bureau of Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES) to Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas revealed that employment creation by class of workers in October 2005 was concentrated mainly among own-account or self-employed workers.

The Laborstat Updates by BLES

culled from the October 2005 Labor Force Survey (LFS) of the National Statistics Office (NSO) showed that the number of self-employed workers grew by 515,000 or 4.4 percent from 11.642 million in October 2004 to 12.2 million in the same period in 2005.

The increment was more than four times the increase in the number of wage and salaried workers which rose only by 0.9 percent from 16.4 million in 2004 to 16.55 million in 2005.

The biggest increment by class of worker, however, occurred among unpaid family workers, at

12.9 percent from 3.7 million in 2004 to 4.2 million in 2005. The rise is concentrated in agriculture, which experienced a recovery last year.

Meanwhile, six rural and women workers associations in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) received a total of P372,000 in livelihood funds under the DOLE's PRESEED (Promotion of Rural Employment through Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship Development) program.

DOLE-Region 2 Director Nathaniel

Lacambra said that the beneficiaries' associations have been organized by the DOLE in line with its efforts to assist and economically empower workers, including women in rural areas.

He said that the beneficiaries shall use this financial assistance in various entrepreneurial projects such as mushroom culture and processing, bio-organic fertilizer production, cassava cake manufacturing, peanut processing, fish processing, and native cakes making.

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(Salary - US\$ 4,245 per month)

SECOND OFFICER

(Salary - US\$ 2,696 per month)

THIRD OFFICER

(Salary - US\$ 2,335 per month)

CHIEF ENGINEER

(Salary - US\$ 6,039 per month)

1st ASST. ENGINEER

(Salary - US\$ 4,090 per month)

2nd ASST. ENGINEER

(Salary - US\$ 2,698 per month)

3rd ASST. ENGINEER

(Salary - US\$ 2,335 per month)

ELECTRICIAN

(Salary - US\$ 2,698 per month)

PUMPMAN

(Salary - US\$ 1,737 per month)

FITTER

(Salary - US\$ 1,737 per month)

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People, Events & Products

Editor Aries Espinosa

TDG reaffirms partnership with GlobeSolutions

SEVERAL MEMBER COMPANIES OF the Asia-based conglomerate Transnational Diversified Group (TDG) have recently reaffirmed their partnership with leading business communication solutions providers GlobeSolutions and GlobeQUEST.

Some of the companies currently availing of GlobeSolutions and GlobeQUEST services include EasyCall, Asiana Philippines, NYK Fil-Japan, E-Permax Contact Centers, NYK Logistics, TDG Logistics, NCT Transnational Corporation, Yusen Air Services, and Adventure Tours and Travel. The partnership is intended to provide these companies with a comprehensive package of wireless and wireline communication services that can efficiently meet various business needs.

Globe Telecom enterprise business group head Gil B. Genio lauded the continuing partnership with TDG as an example of the many ways by which mobile technology can serve as an effective business tool. "We firmly believe in the power of telecommunica-

tions to empower many businesses," he said. "It is important for dynamic companies in highly competitive industries, like those under the TDG umbrella, to harness the power of technology and use it to boost their business performance."

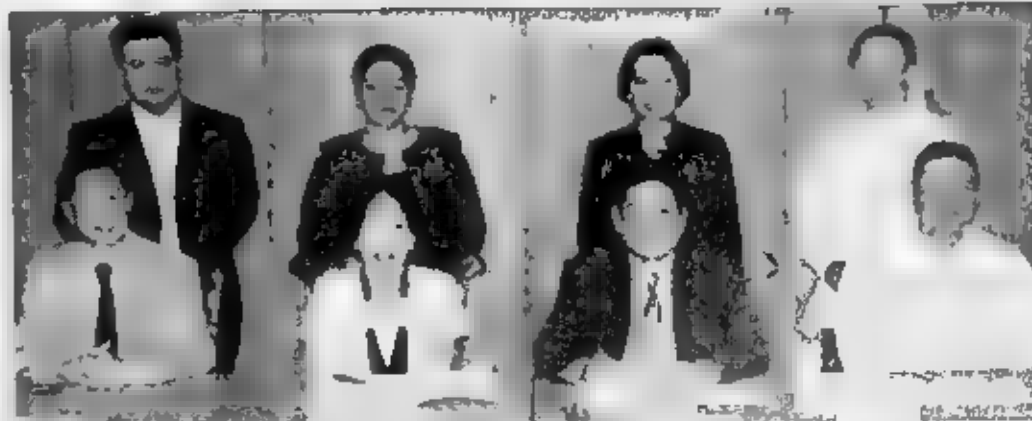
At a product roadshow attended by representatives of several TDG companies, GlobeSolutions and data services provider GlobeQUEST (the corporate services arm of Globe subsidiary Innovate Communications) presented their latest line-up of services. These include messaging solutions like TxtConnect and TxtHotline, enterprise mobility solutions such as BlackBerry, Tracker CE and Visibility, internet data center networks and unified messaging systems.

Among those present at the event were Asiana Philippines general manager Hyun Il Kim; Gil Galang, IT head for TDG's Logistics Group; Ton Tlu, senior projects manager for E-Permax Contact Centers; Ferdinand Abano, VP for IT at E-Permax Contact Centers;

Ed Abalos of Transnational E Business; Melissa Balatbat of NYK Logistics; Julius Lansang of NYK Pil Ship; and Tess Decena of NYK Pil Japan. They were welcomed by the GlobeSolutions team headed by Dan S. David (head of corporate wireless business), Maridol D. Ylanan (head of sales) and Paolo C. Lopez (head of VAS), along with GlobeQUEST sales head Aries Sayson.

TDG has over 30 member companies that are key players in diverse fields including logistics, airlines and travel services, information and communications technology, securities and investments, real estate, international trade, ship management, and manpower training. It currently employs about 2,000 land-based employees and deploys around 7,000 seafarers and shipping crew worldwide.

GlobeSolutions provides efficient and cost-effective solutions for your company's business communication needs. For inquiries, call the GlobeSolutions hotline at 730-1999 or email globesolutions@globetel.com.ph.



DLSU SIGNS UP FOR UCPB'S ELECTRONIC BANKING SERVICES

De La Salle University (DLSU) has partnered with UCPB to provide more convenient service to students and parents and raise more funds for scholarships. UCPB's Online Transaction Viewing facility will provide DLSU with an electronic facility to make enrollment more convenient for students and parents via UCPB branches and ATMs. On the other hand, UCPB's Paymate Collection facility for alumni will serve as a medium for electronic donation for scholarships. Shown signing the memorandum of agreement are (seated from left): DLSU

vice president for academics and research Dr. Julius Mandable, DLSU executive vice president Dr. Carmelita Quebengco, UCPB president and chief executive officer Joss Querubin, and UCPB senior executive vice president and chief operating officer Antonio Cailao. Witnessing the signing are (standing from left): DLSU controller Francisco De La Cruz Jr., DLSU assistant vice president for academic services Agnes Yuhico, UCPB executive vice president Evangelina Samonte and UCPB senior vice president Sebastian Santiago II.

Probiotics for festive indulgence without the guilt

GRAZING ON PARTY FOOD IS SO EASY AND, well, you can always sort it out with your New Year resolutions, but the next morning you regret it as you feel bloated and sluggish. So what can you do?

If you are prone to digestive upset, a course of Probiotics started before the holiday season could go a long way towards helping. Probiotics is the collective term for friendly bacteria that inhabit our digestive tract, from top to bottom. They do many important jobs in our body. These beneficial bacteria will help to normalize bacterial colonies in the large bowel and reduce gas and bloating. A good Probiotics supplement will include prebiotics, such as FOS (fructooligosaccharide) which acts as food for the beneficial bacteria and helps them to get established more quickly. Lactobacilli and Bifido Probiotics combination in microencapsulated form are best used, because of their stability, meaning that what's stated on the label is what you end up taking (instead of the bacteria deteriorating as many bacterial supplements do). Lactobacillus acidophilus also, has a good track record against the "ulcer bug" *Helicobacter pylori* and can help reduce damaged gut lining thus protecting against ulceration.

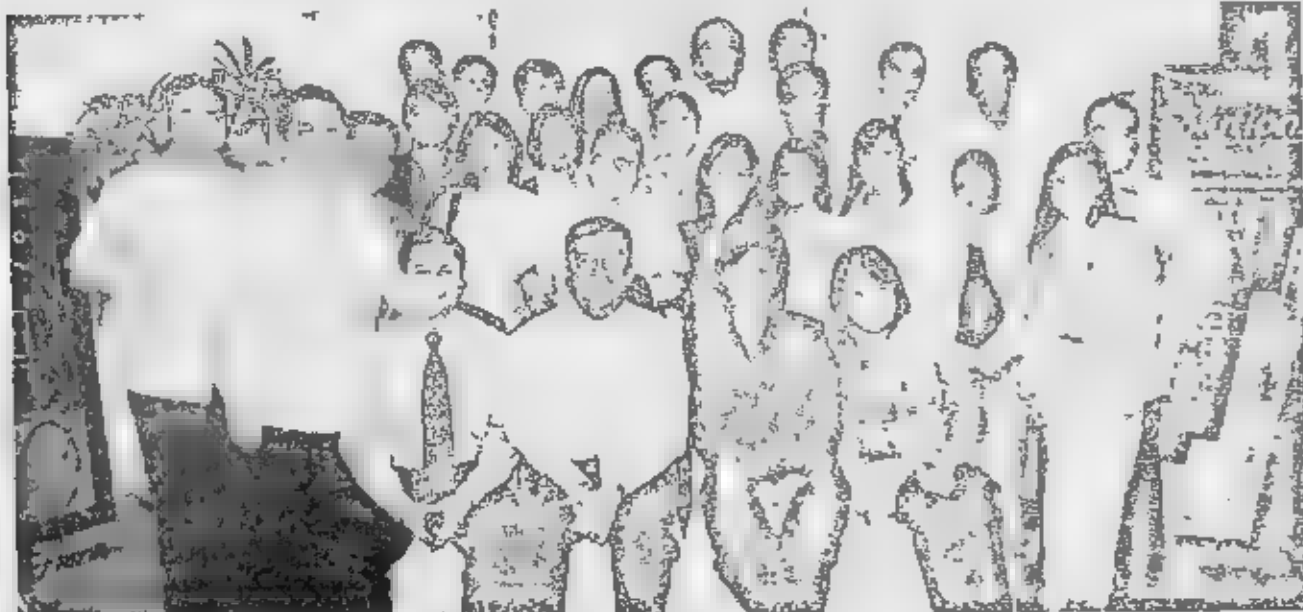
A new multi-strain Probiotics developed from England was recently introduced. Proterin Natural Care, is an advanced microencapsulated Probiotics formulation developed for better stability and consistent efficacy.

We should be taking Proterin during or after our meals because Probiotics produce basic enzymes that are naturally present and they help digest up to 90 percent of the food eaten and aging slows down the digestive power of our body, but Probiotics can return that power to normal.

Finally, halitosis (bad breath) is a common complaint that accompanies digestive problems. Did you know that taking Probiotics can help eliminate halitosis due to digestive problems? With regular intake of Proterin, there is no need to avoid that kiss after the holidays.

One thing that really helps a hangover (apart from absence) is a tablet of Proterin Probiotics - before, during or after drinking before you go to bed. Most of the side effects of extra alcohol are actually the effects of dehydration: dry mouth, thirst, crashing headache.

For more information on Proterin, contact tel. nos. 02-8099848 or mobile 0922-888-2600 or visit the website, www.prebiotech.net.



GLOBE head of enterprise business Gil Genio, head of corporate business Dan David (last row, sixth and seventh from left), GlobeQUEST head of sales Aries Sayson and GlobeSolutions head of sales Maridol Ylanan (front row, second and third from left) with representatives from Globe and their partners from the TDG group of companies.

2,000 MORE WAYS TO PAY PSBANK LOANS

PSBank has provided the customer with another fast and convenient means of paying loans through PSBank, Metrobank and BancNet automated teller machines (ATM) nationwide. Consumer loan products which can be paid through ATMs include PSBank Autoloan, PSBank Flexloan, PSBank Construction Loan, PSBank Home Credit Line, PSBank Home Rate Protect, PSBank Money Card and PSBank SME Business Credit Line. Now PSBank loan clients can pay among 2,000 PSBank, Metrobank and BancNet ATMs. To top it all, they can even pay outside banking hours and even on weekends.



Aktivade joins 2005 Annual Fitness Convention

PHYSICAL FITNESS IS A KEY ELEMENT to development; it allows individuals to attain their goals and enjoy life to the fullest.

Aktivade, the fast growing favorite thirst quencher of athletes and people on the go, is a dedicated advocate of physical fitness. One way of showing its commitment is by sponsoring the recently concluded Annual Fitness Convention at the AFP New Officers Club, Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City.

Around 300 to 500 athletes, fitness enthusiasts, coaches, athletic trainers, PE teachers, group exercise instructors, personal trainers, physical therapists, nutritionists and fitness business managers and owners from all over the country participated in this timely event.

The event was designed to spread the good news of health and fitness through education. It also served as a great opportunity for Filipinos to acquaint themselves with the latest fitness programs of other countries. Seminars and workshops

were conducted during the two-day convention wherein local and international fitness experts shared their expert views and opinions regarding physical fitness.

Exercising and engagement in sports are recommended ways of attaining physical fitness and Aktivade makes a dependable fitness buddy. Aktivade helps in keeping people physically and physiologically fit with its ideal balance of electrolytes, carbohydrates, and vitamin C. It is the ideal drink as it aids in quickly restoring lost fluid, minerals and energy to prevent dehydration.

The Annual Fitness Convention is the brainchild of the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines, a non-stock, non-profit association that is now on its 15th year of commitment to the cause of professionalizing and uplifting the standards of the fitness industry in the country. For more details about Aktivade Thirst Quencher, check out www.aktivade.com.

Fitness First Fairview soon to open

FITNESS FIRST, THE NO. 1 global Fitness Company will open its twelfth club in the Philippines. The new club will be located at SM City Fairview and is set to invigorate the fitness scene this side of the Metropolis this 2006.

Fitness First offers to everyone, no matter what his or her size, shape and ability, the opportunity to improve his or her level of fitness and have fun - all at an affordable price.

Upon entering any Fitness First club, members notice the difference. The surroundings are comfortable and friendly with like-minded individuals striving to reach their own personal goals, knowing that they are not in competition with anyone but themselves.

Fitness First provides the best facilities, from the cardio the-

atre, to the group exercise studios, to the latest strength training, core and cardio equipment, even with the luxurious sauna and steam, there is no question that they are far ahead of competition.

The club also offers a Passport membership which allows access to more than 400 clubs in Asia and Europe.

Pioneer membership for Fitness First Fairview are now available, call 849-80000 today for inquiries and reservations. You can also check out the website at www.fitnessfirst.com.ph for more information on its clubs in Alabang, Greenhills, ABS-CBN, Fort Bonifacio, RSC-Makati, Eastwood City, Robinsons Metro East, Ayala Center Cebu, Ortigas, Manila and Fitness First Plus at RCBC Plaza.



HOLIDAY FUN WITH MINISTOP'S MINNI AND TOPPER

Ministop mascots Minni and Topper recently treated kids from the GMA Kapuso Foundation to an afternoon of fun and merriment through a Christmas bash held at the Party Room of Dreamscape in Robinson's Galleria. The event, which was especially held for children from impoverished families in Bulacan,

featured a storytelling session by Rod Hebreros of the Children's Library, delicious Ministop snacks, party games and gifts. Dressed up as Ministop's crew, Minni and Topper entertained the kids in the manner that all regular Ministop personnel are trained: accommodating, friendly and service-oriented.



NBS ISKULAKBAY WINNERS DRIVE WITH JAZZ

Six lucky individuals drove away with brand-new Honda Jazz as National Book Store awarded the winners of the Back-to-School Iskulkabay Raffle Promo. The winners, Razel Arceo, Hartatik Llem, Geofani Hamoy, Margarita Grande, Precious Ann Sosa and Kevin Rey Perales, were drawn from over a million raffle entries from

Metro Manila, Luzon and Visayas-Mindanao areas. The winners were also given P25,000 worth of National Book Store gift certificates which they donated to their favorite schools. Shown are the NBS promo winners (from left): Margarita Grande, Precious Ann Sosa, Kevin Rey Perales, Razel Arceo and Hartatik Llem.

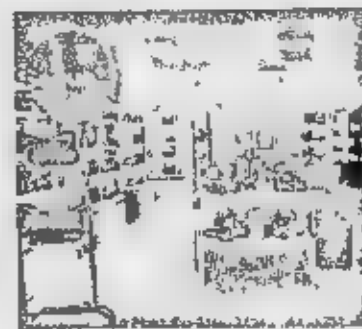
New course on video at MFI

MERALCO FOUNDATION INSTITUTE (MFI) HAS STARTED ACCEPTING applicants/enrollees for the Home Video Editing Course where students will learn how to transfer from tapes to VCDs/DVDs, how to trim, cut part of video, enhance video color, create slow motions or strobe effects, and rearrange scenes from the video clips. Other advantages include: how to adjust audio volume, provide voice-over, insert favorite music or mp3 with ease, insert background sound or music, insert captions or titles, put menu chapters, create a potential business in a matter of weeks. Anyone can enroll. If you are a computer user, loves to shoot videos or still photos, a video enthusiast or just a beginner, a potential business entrepreneur, etc. The course requires 20 hours of intense hands-on training. Schedules for public run encounter: every Saturdays at 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., every Monday to Thursday at 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Customized schedules for 6 or more participants can also be accommodated. For more information, ask for Mavic or Jen of the Development Department at 632-0756 to 67, or visit Meralco Foundation Institute at MFI Bldg. on Ortigas Ave. in Pasig.

Product Files

Duty Free launches Segue Boutique

DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES recently launched Segue Boutique at its Fiestamall 2nd Floor Store. Segue shops address a wide target of consumers and the products aim at satisfying the needs of a clientele, mainly females between 15 and 40 years old. Segue fulfills the requests and expectations of both a youthful public looking for an essential but functional product



at a contained price, and those of more demanding people who want goods with quality and image, and a good price ratio.

Brother ranks No. 1

BROTHER INT'L PHILS, ONE OF the leading manufacturers of printers, multi function and other office equipment ranked No. 1 in the third quarter of this year for the Laser Multi Function Peripheral category in the Philippines, according to the Asian IDC report. The industry data accounted that Brother Philippines increased by almost 17 percent from the previous quarter. Moreover, the company has been ranked the overall No. 1 in this category for all the Asian regions which includes Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Philippines market. Brother is continuously climbing atop because of its innova-



tive products, efficient service and their wide range of solutions for the customers' different needs. For more inquiries please contact Lalaine Masina (marketing department) Brother Int'l (Phils) Corp 11/F Chatham House, V.A. Rufino cor Valero Sts. Makati City, tel. nos (632) 845-1978 loc. 350, fax no 845 1978, e-mail www.brother.com.ph

MAKING
a new you /C4

LIFESTYLE

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or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Pilates side leg lift series 2

THIS PILATES-INSPIRED EXERCISE strengthens the obliques (muscles that crisscross the waist) as well as the hips and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment
Exercise mat

Exercise technique

1. Lie on your side with your legs together in line with your hips and shoulders.

2. Rest your head on your bent bottom arm and place your top hand in front of your chest on the mat with your palm flat and your fingertips fac-

ing your head.

3. Exhale as you lift both legs. Inhale as you lower them to the mat.

Performance tips

1. Always contract your abdominal muscles first before you lift your legs to protect your lower back.

2. Foot position: Point your feet as you lift the legs. Flex your feet as you bring the legs down.

3. Avoid jerking. Move slowly with control as you lift and lower legs.

4. Keep your shoulder and hip from rolling forward or backward as you lift

your legs by contracting your abdominal muscles and visualizing a glass of water on your shoulder and hip.

5. Always lengthen and elongate your legs as you lift.

6. Try to bring your knees and ankles together.

7. This is an advanced exercise. Do not attempt this if you have a history of lower back problems. Ask your doctor first.

Repetitions

Do five to 10 repetitions on each side.

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The truth about infomercial claims

IT ALL STARTED IN 1996 WITH THE Ab-Flex, that plastic spaceship look-alike that promised to give users a "flat, sexy stomach in just three minutes a day." The "amazing" claim spurred Richard Cotton, then chief exercise physiologist of the American Council on Exercise (ACE), to commission the first scientific study on a fitness product sold on television.

Exaggerated promises in infomercial convince consumers to buy the products. The Ab-Flex ad was so successful sales reached US\$320 million.

Six months after the ACE study was released, the Federal Trade Commission penalized the maker of the product for making unsubstantiated claims.

Since then, the nonprofit fitness advocacy organization has lived up to its role as "workout watchdog" by sponsoring university-based studies to determine whether infomercial products really live up to their claims.

Here are more of ACE's findings from its website. To see a full report, go to www.acefitness.org. Click on "ACE Fit Facts," then click on "research studies."

Ab-Flex System

The claim: "The most effective stomach firming exercise product on the market today."

The bottom line: Effective at isometrically recruiting ab muscles, but no more effective than using a large book or block of wood in a similar way.

(1996, California State University, Long Beach)

Aerobic Riders

Cardio Glide, E-Force and Health Rider

The claim: "A critical look at three popular aerobic riders and their relative effectiveness."

The bottom line: Novice exercisers will get the most out of the aerobic riders, but consumers who are already fit are better off working out on

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan



a treadmill.

(1996, California State University, Northridge)

Abdominal Trainers

Ab Roller Plus, ABSculptor and AB-Works

The claim: "Trim 4-6 inches off your frame" and get "the World's Greatest Abs."

The bottom line: None of the ab trainers were more effective—or as inexpensive—as the good old-fashioned crunch.

(1997, California State University, Northridge)

Aerobic Gliders

Airofit and Fitness Flyer

The claim: A full-body workout that's fun and effective, adaptable to all fitness levels and enjoyable enough to do every day.

The bottom line: "May be less effective than a quick walk or slow jog for most exercise enthusiasts."

(1997, California State University, Northridge)

Elliptical trainers

Ellipse, Health Rider, Elliptical Cross Trainer, Power Train and Cyclone

The claim: "Burns five times more calories than a treadmill at 2.7 mph." Power Train: "Burns 35 percent more calories than a treadmill or stationary bicycle."

The bottom line: Although elliptical trainers provide a low-impact, effective workout, both claims are inaccurate.

(1998, University of Mississippi)

Time Works

The claim: "Total-body fitness in just four minutes a day" and "lose pounds—minute for minute, burn nearly three times the calories of a treadmill, rider or strider!"

The bottom line: The Time Works' claims are false and misleading.

(1999, Appalachian State University)

Tanita Body Fat Scale

The claim: A quick and easy way to measure body-fat percentage at home.

The bottom line: It's difficult to achieve an accurate reading every time and it's nearly impossible for the very lean or obese to get accurate readings.

(1999, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine)

Electrical Muscle Stimulation (EMS)

Ab Energizer, AbTronic, Fast Abs

The claim: Get "rock-solid abs" and firmer thighs and buttocks—all without breaking a sweat.

The bottom line: Home-based EMS units are ineffective, time-consuming and—at times—even painful.

(2000, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse)

AB-DOer

The claim: "Lose at least two inches from your waist in just 10 days or your money back."

The bottom line: AB-DOer provides a low-intensity workout and does not live up to its claims.

(2001, California State University, Northridge)

Note: The Basic Fitness Instructor Course of the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines begins Jan. 14. Call Joy at 9202762 or 0917-5181202.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

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Stars go for healthy living in 2006

CELEBRITIES VOW TO ADOPT A healthy lifestyle in 2006 and kick their bad habits.

The monthly Mirror magazine, in its first issue for the year, reports on how celebrities plan to stay fit and healthy this year.

Lucy Torres, for one, will follow a healthy low-fat, low-calorie diet despite the goodies she has to prepare when she entertains at home.

Alessandra de Rossi, Angel Locsin and Iza Calzado have also resolved to pursue healthy lifestyles the whole year round.

Meanwhile, the magazine reports on a treatment for asthma in Ukraine. Asthma is a common illness among

Filipino families and attacks are often treated with a nebulizer.

In Solotvino, Ukraine, a treatment has proven effective in healing lung ailments but it can be found 300 meters below ground.

The Ukrainian allergological hospital (an institution specializing in allergies) practices speleotherapy, the use of the microclimates of underground places like mines or caves, to treat lung ailments.

Mirror explores this treatment, citing the experiences of some who have tried the therapy and attest to its effectiveness.

In this issue, learn more about troubled supermodel Kate Moss who

is back at work after checking out of a drug rehabilitation program in October. Mirror tells how she rose to fame, became an icon and almost lost her job after being photographed allegedly sniffing cocaine.

On the cover of the December-January issue is one of the country's most talented young actresses, Nancy Castiglione. The Filipino-Canadian tells of her journey of self-discovery and how much she enjoys her stay in the Philippines.

Mirror is published by the Philippine Graphic Publications Inc., which also publishes the Philippine Graphic Newsweekly Magazine and Cook, the Culinary Lifestyle Magazine.

Healthful toast to good life

HEALTHY OPTIONS, THE natural products store, marks its 10th anniversary by offering premium organic wines from boutique wineries in France, Italy, Spain, Chile, Argentina, and South Africa.

The wines are suitable for any get-togethers and celebrations throughout the year.

Toasts can be offered with two of Healthy Options' non-alcoholic beverages. The Knudsen Sparkling Organic Apple Cider has the clean taste of ripe apples. The Amé Radiant Red Non-Alcoholic Wine has the goodness and flavor of a bright red without the alcohol. The sparkling fruit drink has a unique blend of exotic eastern herbal extracts such as Schisandra, Jasmine, Gentian and Limeflower.

Healthy Options is offering special single-bottle or twin pack gift boxes for its organic wines. Twin pack boxes are available for any two choices from Organic Vintners Bianco, Organic Vintners Chardonnay, Organic Vintners Rosso and Organic Vintners Rouge.

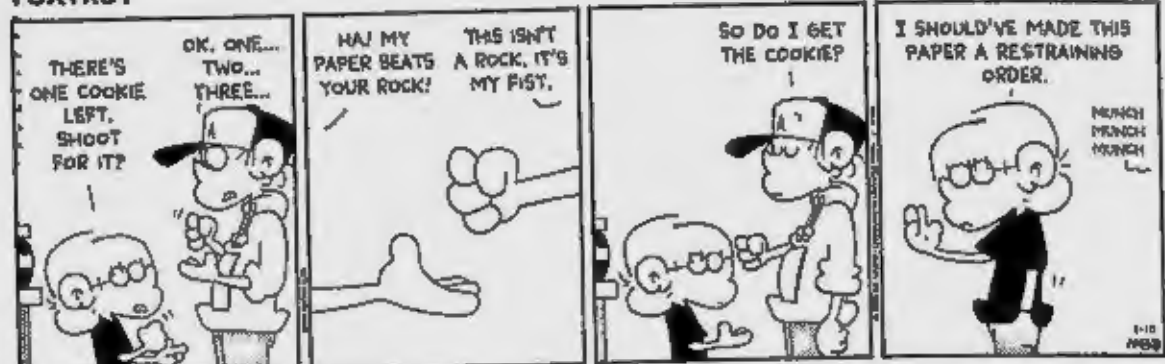
Healthy Options stores are at Level 1 of Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; level 2 of Festival Supermarket, Alabang; ground level of Ayala Center, Cebu City; lower ground floor of SM City, North Edsa; level 2 of SM City, Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; at level 2 of SM Megamall B, Edsa, Mandaluyong City, and SM Pampanga.

Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph

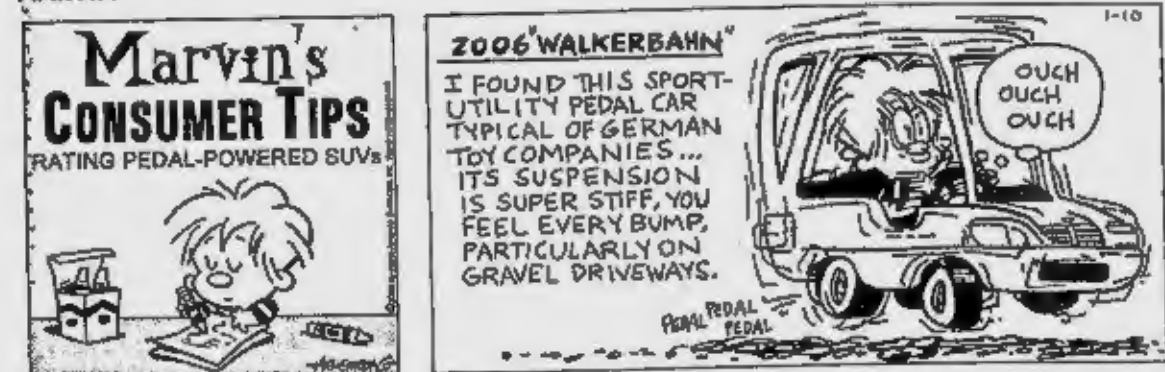


NON-ALCOHOLIC beverages like these apple cider and organic red "wine" will help make 2006 a healthier year.

FOXTROT



MARVIN



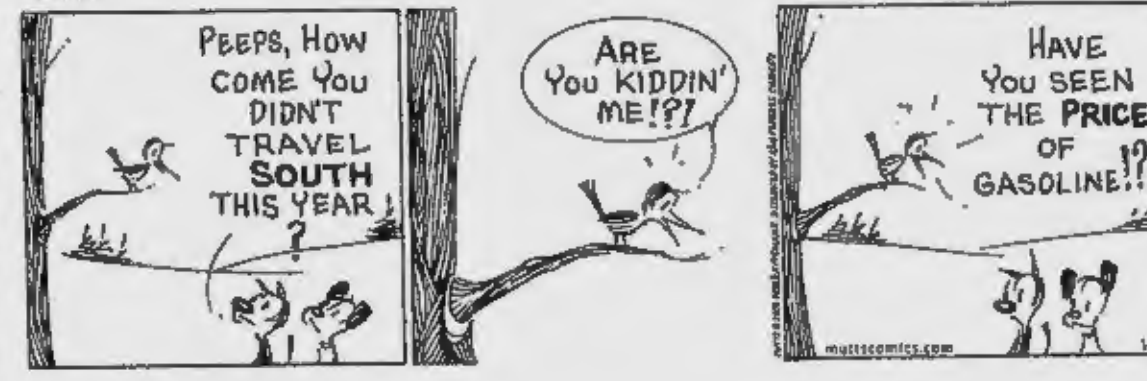
PUGAD BABOY



BABY BLUES



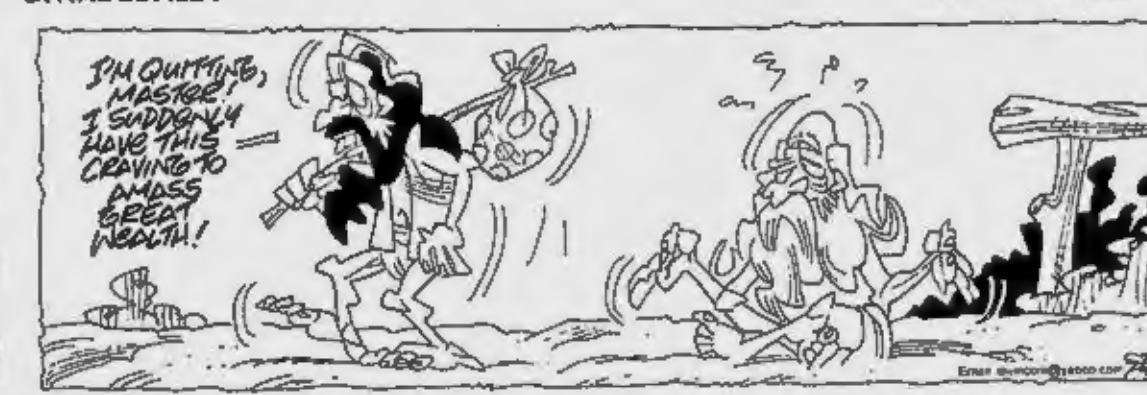
MUTTS



ATOMO AND WEBBO



DIVINE COMEDY



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You always take a realistic look at things. This is one of your great strengths. You're excellent at sizing up any situation. You're also outspoken; you say what you mean and you mean what you say. People respect you for this. You have integrity. The year ahead might be one of the most powerful, fortunate years of your life! Birthdate of: Rod Stewart, singer; Sal Mineo, actor; George Foreman, boxer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a slightly accident-prone day; therefore, be careful. It's also a verbally accident-prone day; therefore, think before you speak. You can be helpful to children now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The Moon is in your sign today; however, you feel restless. Anything can happen! Conversations with parents, bosses and VIPs make you feel independent, perhaps even rebellious!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might meet a real character today. Alternatively, someone you know might surprise you. Be careful about lending money and possessions or borrowing anything. Something unpredictable will happen!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Something having to do with money and groups of friends is a bit unpredictable today. Think twice before you make a financial commitment or lend money to anyone. Ditto for your own possessions.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Dealings with the government and large institutions are solid today. Expect interruptions to plans and matters related to publishing and the media. Educational schedules will also change.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You don't want anybody bossing you around today. You feel independent and a tad touchy. Don't bite back, however. That only makes things worse. (Who wants worse?)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Computer crashes and power outages or interruptions to your daily work schedule are likely today. Just cope with a smile. Be patient. Demonstrate grace under pressure.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Parents must keep an eye on children today, because it is a mildly accident-prone day. Romance is full of surprises. Unexpected flirtations are unnerving but quietly thrilling.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be patient when talking to partners and close friends today. Arguments can easily erupt. People are a bit huffy and sensitive today. Try to respect this.

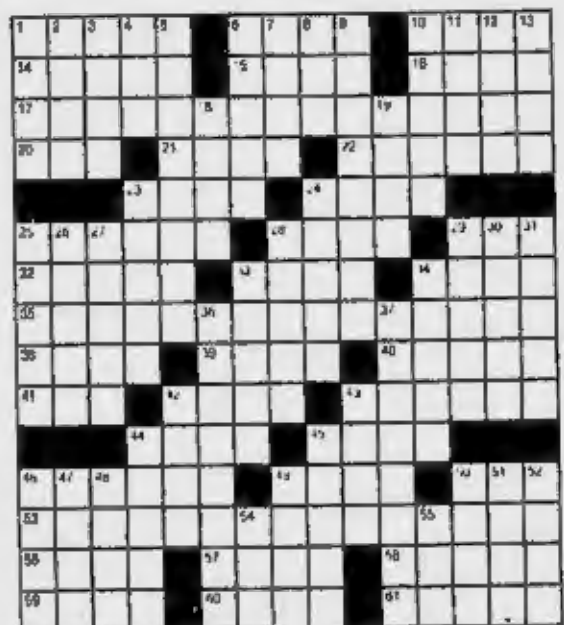
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your work schedule will definitely change today. Perhaps new technology will be introduced. Perhaps new technology will break down! (Oh my, what a surprise.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Parents must be careful with children today. Keep an eye on them. Unusual, creative ideas will occur. Surprise flirtations might please you. (It's just another form of admiration.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Go slowly at home today, because, in haste, you might break something. Be patient with family members, edgy today. Surprise company could drop by. Stock the fridge so that you have something to offer.

DAILY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Capital of Oregon
 - Viking red head
 - Three-piece piece
 - Maytag rival
 - Italian actress Eleonora
 - Butter substitute
 - So long song
 - Double bend
 - One who performs
 - S.A. hoopsters
 - Sea eagles
 - Gilbert or Teasdale
 - Theatrical works
 - Bend
 - Plains, IL
 - Toy-cube inventor
 - Office folder
 - Bartok or Lugosi
 - So long novel
 - Places
 - 500-mile race
 - Titles
 - Linguistic suffix
 - Bestor's figures
 - Indistinct
 - Hawaiian guitars
 - Oatish character
 - Codger
 - Beal it!
 - Skater
 - Babilonia
 - So long song
 - A single tone
 - Uor's greeting
 - Strange
 - Hydroxyl compound
 - Weeps
 - March growths
- DOWN**
- Wise man
 - Songstress Tori
 - Cambodia neighbor
 - Terminator
 - May apple
 - Periphery
 - Rhine tributary
 - Adherent's suffix
 - Wine cabinet
 - Distilled mash
 - Winter Wiesal
 - Prophet
 - Throw
 - Charged particles
 - Org. for seniors
 - Bahrain rulers
 - Charlie Brown's sister
 - Hang loosely
 - T. Firefly (Groucho Marx character)
 - Ease off
 - Uninhabited region
 - Stuffed (loshke)
 - Gantry or Roca
 - Smart-alecky
 - Warda (off)
 - Called sheepishly
 - Expanders
 - Claper
 - Approva
 - United voting group
 - Flower cluster
 - Scorchers
 - Orchestra member
 - Actress Redgrave
 - Art
 - Pitching rubber
 - Wear out
 - Dry
 - Middle of Roman months
 - Frightening word
 - Pollen gatherer



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

Monday's Puzzle Solved



STAB BOAT ATLAS
DOSE AUDI PRONE
INTL STAR PENTA
SILVERMEDALIST
YALU ILL
AFUOL NEONLIGHT
BURPED TOE SHOE
ART TINHORN ALE
COHO SOO SIGNET
IRONHORSE TRASH
SAW MERE
PLATINUMBLONDE
RENAL LEOI DEEP
OSAGE EAST ELLE
FETED ELSE LISA

MIKROKOSMOS



BEN



KIKO MACHINE



LOVEKNOTS



TULDOK



Four-team badminton tourney ends

THE GREEN TEAM WAS DECLARED champion in the first Berocca Inter-color Badminton Tournament at the Manila Polo Club.

Four teams competed in the tournament.

Berocca Performance kept the competitors in top shape with its combination of B and C vitamins plus other essential minerals, specially formulated for optimal performance at work and at play. A tablet of Berocca in a glass of cold water helps keep people mentally and physically fit and optimizes energy and mental process throughout the day.

Green team consisted of Vincent Lim, vice president for finance, Solid Group Inc.; Amanda Carpio; Lawrence Lesaca; Henry and Nicole Morris; Benson Siao; Mariel Tiango; Linda Yap, wife of Wilson Yaplanwee, president of Crown Jewel; Marvin Lim; Anil Sehwan, vice president of Sehwan Hotel; Leica Carpio; Ravi Sehwan, vice president of ITSP International, Inc.; Marco Bermejo; Alex Carpio; Thomas Owen; Jess Rerez; Hernan Lim, president of HOC PO Reeds

Corporation; and John Campos, owner of La Paz Realty.

Second-placer Yellow Team was composed of Raymond Rodrigo; Jan Campos; Mark Puyat, chief financial officer, KKC Inc.; David Lim, president, Destiny Inc.; Alex Tiu, manager, Amorsolo Mansion; Rina Samson, treasurer, Samson's Enterprises; Monica Yungaco; businessman Ted Jimenez of Daalco Inc./Vicars Realty; Juanmi Laurel, president, Mini Ventures; Jocelyn Nicdao, wife of Ruperto Nicdao, president, Manila Broadcasting Company; Gina Campos, wife of Jan Antonio Campos, vice president, Genel Development Corp.; Matthew Lim; Miguel David; Marga Canara; Isabelle Nicdao; Frank Cruz, director, Southern Cross Distribution, Inc.; Sarah Cheng; and Martin Araneta.

Black Team placed third. It consisted of Martin Fernandez, vice president, Alcatel Philippines; Joseph Tan; Gili Coscolluela, head designer of WV Coscolluela & Associates Architects; Gene Lamb; James Roman; Inday Mallari; Carol Francisco, proprietress Pobleto



RICKY Davao, Berocca's Debbie Go, Daisy Gutierrez, Glydel Mercado and Tonton Gutierrez

Realty & Development Corp.; Cheska Bermejo; Jet Suarez; Alvin and Becky Co; Prem Jandani, son of Gobindram Jandani, own-

er/manager, GSSP Corp.; Patrick Jalasco, grandson of former President Fidel V. Ramos; Sam Singer; Eliza Constantino, investment

banking officer of Far East Bank Investment, Inc.; Lal Gopwani, general manager of Branded Life Style Inc.; William Tan Untiong;

and Nareh Ramnani, chief operating officer, New Trends International (Timex Philippines).

Composing the White Team were Dondi Santos; Judy Lim, wife of Solid Group's Vincent Lim; Paolo Puyat, general manager, Tam-bunting Pawnshop; Michael Lim, son of Solid Group's Vincent; architect Alfred Weineke of A.V. Weineke II & Associates; Luz Siguan-Reyna, wife of lawyer Leonardo Siguan-Reyna, senior managing partner, Siguan-Reyna Montecillo Ongsialko Law Office; Reena Aguilar; Ian Ocampo, son of Adrian Ocampo, president and chief executive officer, Philippine Educational Trust and Pension; Michael Aguilar, husband of Catherine Aguilar, owner, Panbi Fabrics; Debbie Yabut, wife of Peter Yabut, president, Credit Solutions Inc.; Weng Chang; William Chua; Joaquin Camus; Julianne Nicdao; Ale Muñoz of Commodities Trading Co., Inc.; Julia Lim, wife of Destiny's president; Cristina Ramos; and Wally Fernandez.

Berocca is available at drug stores nationwide.

A new you

(Part 2)

"I will see it when I believe it."
—Wayne Dyer

TIME AND AGAIN, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS and life coaches have said it: Quit the negative programming and replace it with the positive. Easier said than done.

So, how does one begin? Countless seminars have been developed to overcome obstacles largely created by the mind with the objective of mastering the self.

Mind coach Cornelius Pols, in a one-hour session at the serene amphitheater of the Farm Medical Spa in San Benito, said human beings are naturally self-reflective, therefore, we are always thinking whether something will be self-fulfilling or self-defeating.

Self-destruct

A built-in mechanism inside of us all automatically goes on self-destruct each time we go through an unpleasant experience. Traumas, hurts, pains, failures are played constantly, reminding us to fear an actual reenactment of the experience. The past, if not seen in its proper perspective, will eventually color present and future experiences.

Visualization techniques

There are several effective and fun ways to by-pass this self-destruct tendency. Try them and see how they can easily change your experience by giving you a new perspective and new feeling.

Donald Duck

Retrieve from your mind a sad or disturbing experience.

1. Now imagine that the person who caused you pain has changed his/her voice to Donald Duck's while still saying the same hurtful things once said to you.
2. Hold on to this visualization and store it in your mind as the new memory.

In the movies

1. Take a negative experience. Play it out in your mind. See the drama that once caused you pain—and still does each time you recall it.
2. Now, set it to the musical scoring of your favorite movie—Star Wars, Superman, etc.
3. Raise the volume of the music until it drowns the hurtful conversations.
4. From now on, your bad memory will be set to music. And all you will remember is the dramatic melody drowning out all sorrows.

Shattered glass

1. Retrieve the painful memory. Turn it into a picture.
2. Transfer it onto glass or a mirror.
3. See it before you.
4. Now allow it to break up into tiny pieces until it is no longer

there.
5. Keep replacing the old hurts one after the other as fast as you can.
6. Exhaust every trauma and obliterate it like small shattered splinters of glass.

Master painting

1. Choose a memory you want to erase from your mind.
2. Imagine all the details of this experience.

3. Transfer it onto a canvass as though capturing it within a picture frame.

4. Have the hurt converted into a master painting by Michelangelo, Picasso,

Amorsolo, etc. Soften the colors of your experience or express them loudly in bold shapes for you are the master painter.

5. Know that the pain is now outside yourself and can no longer hurt you.

New you

1. Picture yourself as you would like to be, say a year or two from today.
2. Project onto your right side a few feet in front of you (if you are right-handed) on the left side (if you are left-handed).
3. If the image of your new self is acceptable to you, your instincts will confirm this. Like an audition, present before yourself several new versions of you.
4. Take your time. You can have several versions. Perhaps you would like to look slimmer and younger, happier, more successful, etc. The choices are yours.
5. Once you find the right new version of you, accept it as who you will become.
6. Each night before going to bed, recall the new image and affirm to yourself: "Yes, this is who I will be."

Breathing in the new

1. Make it a daily habit to do slow deep-breathing exercise preferably first thing in the morning.
2. Stand up, raise your arms toward the sky as you inhale.
3. Hold your breath.
4. Exhale slowly.

Beauty brush-up

1. Get a small towel, rub it against your skin for 5-7 minutes.
2. Use upward strokes from feet to neck.
3. This will get your lymph moving to help circulation and detoxify your body.

Postscript

Newness begins in the mind, though it is fueled by the heart. Life offers so many possibilities to create and re-create. If you want to change your life as wise men say, begin by changing yourself. Love and light!

Reference: Cornelius Pols, mind coach (call 0917-4205257; e-mail junpols@yahoo.com)

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INSIDE OUT



Cory Quirino

What readers ask

I WOULD LIKE TO DEVOTE THIS COLUMN to answering questions sent via e-mail and text by readers.

The following questions are from Delia Roxas:

1. "Is it true one can hardly sleep when someone is thinking of him/her? Is this some kind of mental telepathy? Do you have a simple procedure to follow to enhance one's telepathic powers?"

Yes, that is a case of telepathic communication. Whether or not you are able to sleep depends on what the other person is thinking. In fact, you may even sleep and dream of the person thinking of you.

There is a technique to enhance telepathic communication, but I teach this only in my Basic ESP and Intuition Development seminar. If you are interested to know more about the training program, you may call my office at 8926806 or 8107245.

2. "How can a person avoid kulam or usog? Is there a simple way? Why are some people susceptible to this while others are not?"

The word usog usually refers to small children or babies who get sick when greeted or touched by another person. And the usual remedy prescribed by local healers is for the person who caused the usog to apply his/her saliva on the forehead of the child who usually gets well immediately.

I understand usog is caused by the energy of the child being suddenly drained by another person unintentionally or unconsciously. The child's protective aura is still weak and thin and, therefore, more easily penetrated or punctured.

Kulam is the Tagalog term for sorcery or black magic. It is doing harm to another by some occult ritual or process, usually in-

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licaucio



volving incantations, some re-presentation of the victim, such as picture, doll or likeness.

To remove or counteract the effects of kulam, one needs special training. It can't be done just by anyone. Powerful sorcerers have been known to attack the healer who tries to remove the kulam, so there is danger here.

Some people are susceptible to kulam because they may be physically or psychologically weak. Those who have weak willpower are more susceptible to kulam than those who are strong-willed.

3. "Is there truth about destiny? The Bible says humans may have plans but the Lord determines the final outcome."

I am not familiar with that passage in the Bible. Anyway, what I know and believe is this: There is no predestination except what we ourselves have freely chosen to be. I believe that a person's will is absolutely free. He/she determines what will happen to him/her, not God. God gave us free will to exercise. If God interferes with our free will, he will be contradicting himself, and he can't do that.

4. "My brother, a Muslim convert, told me about the jinn. According to him, simultaneous with the birth of a person is

also the existence of his/her counterpart jinn. The jinn can mimic everything that people do. When a person dies ahead of the jinn, the jinn is mistaken for a ghost, doing the same things the dead used to do. But when the jinn dies ahead of a person there will be no manifestation. Will you enlighten me on this?"

I guess you will have to ask a Muslim priest or mullah to answer that question authoritatively. I am not familiar with the Muslim religion. Maybe there should be a course in our school that will teach students about the major religions we have in this country, not only Catholicism.

5. "Can you tell something about people even if you don't personally see them, like can you (have) vibes about me kahit with this e-mail lang?"

No, I can't. Neither do I want to do this even if I could. I am a scientific investigator or researcher of paranormal phenomena, healing and higher consciousness. I am not a fortune-teller or psychic. I don't read people, nor predict the future.

6. "Aside from your radio program over DZMM, will you have a television program? I hope you will have one soon."

No, I don't have a TV program of my own, although I have appeared on many television programs both here and abroad. There is a lot of interest in the topics I discuss in this column but we cannot find enough sponsors who will put money into such a program even if it is very educational and entertaining at the same time. But who knows?

Note: For information on seminars I conduct, books I have written and other services I offer, please call 8107245 and 8926806.

Feel and look good

OASIS AT THE 12TH HEALTH Enhancement Center at St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC) in Quezon City is a pioneering hospital-based salon and spa facility.

It aims to provide salon and spa services to hospital patients to support and complement the medical care they receive at SLMC.

With these complementary services, the hospital hopes to make its patients "Look Good and Feel Good!"

At Oasis, an experienced and friendly staff can provide patients with salon and popular spa services during their stay at SLMC. The services are offered to patients and their companions in their own rooms, and with the approval of the attending physician.

Patients can also go to Oasis at Room 1216 of the South Tower at the Cathedral Heights Complex (CHC) of SLMC.

Services are reasonably priced.

Oasis at the 12th also provides services for patients who suffer side effects that affect their appearance because of their condition, illness and/or treatment. Among other things, patients can avail of wig-fitting and styling, and makeover/makeup or "camouflaging."

The spa is also open to outpatients, visitors, staff and doctors of SLMC, and the general public.



UP president Emerlinda Roman, with centennial committee members and guests, at the unveiling of the centennial monument

UPCM marks centennial

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines College of Medicine (UPCM), the country's premier medical education, marked its centennial anniversary recently.

The event was dedicated to the college's many graduates and the people running the institution, according to dean Dr. Cecilia Tomas. To mark the occasion, a Centennial Mass and Interfaith Prayer was held, followed by planting of

the centennial tree, laying of time capsule, unveiling of the centennial monument at the UPCM front garden, and groundbreaking of the Faculty Hall.

The celebration also featured "Siyento: 100 Years of Heritage" awards night and musical gala, and the launch of the centennial commemorative book, "Siyento," documenting the UPCM's first 100 years.

The college paid tribute to UPCM graduates who contributed to the development of national health. It presented the Centennial Lifetime Achievement Awards to seven outstanding alumni: Dr. Paulo C. Campos, Dr. Conrado S. Dayrit, Dr. Fe del Mundo, Dr. Genialino de Ocampo, Dr. Nelia R. Cortes-Maramba, Dr. Juan S. Salcedo Jr., and Dr. Perla Santos Ocampo.

Skin clinic has new branch

WHITE BEAUTY PHILIPPINES Skin Center, the sole distributor of Mer Tathione L-Glutathione Dietary Supplement, recently opened its second branch, now called White Beauty Aesthetic Center, along West Ave., Quezon City. Cory Quirino led the ribbon-cutting ceremony together with former beauty queens Evangelino Pascual and Daisy Reyes.

Aesthetician Olai Ramos-Espinoza, president of White Beau-

ty Aesthetic Center, leads a dynamic team of beauty experts such as Dr. Almond Derla, aesthetic dermatologist, and Dr. Manolito Perreol, plastic, reconstructive and cosmetic surgeon and head of the surgery department of World City Medical Center.

The center offers first-rate services which include facials, mesotherapy, aesthetic dermatology such as nonsurgical

facelift, dermafillers, botox and permanent makeup. Cosmetic surgeries are performed in an operating room to assure clients of privacy and confidentiality.

White Beauty Aesthetic Center is at 2/F West City Plaza, 66 West Ave., QC (3764871-72/0920-9230528); Unit 519 5/F Cityland Shaw Tower, Shaw Blvd. cor. St. Francis St., Mandaluyong City (6372567, 9145063).